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WE'RE IN  
THIS WITH  
RUSSIA





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THIS WITH  
RUSSIA

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*By* WALLACE CARROLL

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PART ONE

THE

APPROACH



# I

## THE ASSIGNMENT

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How will Russia fit into the post-war settlement? Will Stalin try to create a Soviet Europe when the war is won? Will he return to the old ideal of the world revolution? Will the United States, Great Britain, and the other western powers be able to deal with Russia after the war? And what kind of policy will America have to pursue toward the Soviets?

The day I received instructions to leave my post in London and go to Moscow, these questions were only vague wonderings at the back of my mind. It was late in July, 1941, and there were more urgent matters to be considered. The Germans were already in Smolensk, less than two hundred and fifty miles from the Soviet capital, and were advancing swiftly on Leningrad in the north and Kiev and Odessa in the south. No foreign correspondent had ever been permitted to see the Red

Army in action. The United Press wanted me to make every effort to reach the Russian front and then answer the questions America was asking at the moment: How strong is the Red Army? How strong is the Stalin government? How long will the Soviets be able to hold the Germans?

This was my assignment, but as I carried it out and saw the strength of the Soviet resistance, the deeper questions began to move forward in my mind. Perhaps it will seem strange to you that a reporter in the midst of a great war should trouble himself about the problems of an eventual peace, especially when the war was far from won. You may doubt that a newspaperman ever reflects at all — I sometimes wonder myself. But during my twelve years in Europe I had seen how the last peace was lost. My job was diplomatic reporting. I sat in the press galleries and prowled the corridors of conferences on disarmament and conferences on rearmament. I was there when diplomats gathered around the green-covered table in Geneva, London, Paris, Montreux, Brussels, and Évian. When a Yugoslav king was assassinated, when Hitler won his first international victory in the Saar, when two South American nations refused to stop the war in the steaming jungles of the Chaco, I followed the deliberations of the statesmen. I followed them, too, down the road which led from China through Ethiopia, Spain, and Czechoslovakia to Danzig and Poland.

Thus without conscious effort on my part I acquired an interest in the mechanism of peace. And as the Soviet Union came forward in the rôle of a champion of peace, I became more and more interested in the effect of its policies on the delicate combination of pressure valves and balances which governed the whole mechanism. In May, 1934, on the day I began an assignment of four and a half years as manager of the United Press Bureau in Geneva, Maxim Litvinov proposed that the dying Disarmament Conference be transformed into a

permanent peace conference. The Soviet Union was not yet a member of the League of Nations, but both the Soviet Union and the United States had taken a leading part in the disarmament meeting. Litvinov's idea was to maintain the contact between these two great powers and the peace machinery of Geneva. Like most of his proposals it was buried without ceremony.

The next time I saw Litvinov was in the following September. It was the day the League rather grudgingly admitted the Soviet Union to membership. The chubby Commissar for Foreign Affairs had been hiding somewhere in France in case the Soviets were rebuffed, but when everything was arranged he turned up suddenly in Geneva at a second-class hotel whose proprietor thought so little of the Soviet régime that he still treasured a stack of czarist bonds in his strongbox. From then on Litvinov treated Geneva to a display of magic such as the diplomatic world had never seen. He used every device of the League, every technicality in its Covenant, to maneuver the British and French appeasers into a position in which they would have to be firm and courageous in spite of themselves. Then came the Munich Conference, and we all knew that his policy had failed. I remembered seeing him in Geneva on the night when Hitler, Mussolini, Chamberlain, and Daladier were deciding the fate of Czechoslovakia. He loved the movies, and when the afternoon meeting of the League had closed, he went off to the little theater which showed American films to laugh away his troubles at the *Goldwyn Follies*.

From Geneva I moved to London, and in that glorious spring of 1939 I made the rounds of the Foreign Office, 10 Downing Street, the House of Commons, and the French and Soviet Embassies, following the negotiations between Britain, France, and Russia which led only to the Soviet-German pact and a second world war.

During the years in which I pursued the diplomatic circus around Europe, I had become more and more conscious of a weakness in my equipment. I saw the magic of Litvinov and the other Soviet diplomats, but I knew little of what lay behind it. Whether the influence of the Soviet Union was for good or for evil, I was convinced that it could not be ignored. I therefore jumped at the chance to visit that little-known country about which opinions were so contradictory. My assignment would give me only a few months in the Soviet Union, but during that time I hoped to get a working knowledge on which to build.

So I turned over to Edward Beattie, one of our most experienced correspondents, the management of the London bureau with its staff of sixty men, women, and office boys, and prepared to leave England. It was not an easy matter, however, to go to Russia. I thought I had a place on a Catalina flying-boat, but Harry Hopkins came along and took it. The next week the Polish military mission to the Soviet Union monopolized the same plane. Then I was told I might be able to go on a ship. Finally on the afternoon of August 11 I was called to the Transport Division of the Ministry of Information and given a ticket for a vessel identified only as H2.

'You will be sailing on a transport,' said an official. That was the first hint that the British were sending fighting units to Russia, but he spoke as quietly and impersonally as if he were sending me on a peacetime cruise to the Norwegian fiords.

'That means there will not be enough lifeboats for everybody,' he added, 'but there will be rafts, of course, for the rest of you. We shall need your signature on this declaration that you assume all risks.'

That night I caught the midnight train for Liverpool with Vernon Bartlett, an old friend, who was going to Moscow for the British Broadcasting Corporation. The next morning we



drove through the devastated warehouse district to the Liverpool docks and boarded the *Llanstephan Castle*, an eleven-thousand-ton passenger ship of the Union Castle Line. I was bursting with inoculations against all known plagues and I carried, besides my typewriter and a suitcase full of clothes, a bag full of books on Russia and the Far East and a haversack with my helmet and gas-mask, some chocolate bars and concentrated foods — and two louse belts.

## 2

# ARCTIC CONVOY

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THE convoy turned north under the full moon and the mountains of Scotland faded into the mist. Coming out of the turn, the gray merchantmen took up their positions in parallel lines on the silver sea with the tiny warships of the escort riding the swells on their flanks. A beautiful sight through a periscope, one of the silhouettes at the rail remarked, and a fine target for an enterprising U-boat.

Far ahead lay the unknown Arctic. With the Germans in Norway and Finland, the familiar routes to Russia were barred. This first convoy to the Soviet front would therefore have to pioneer a course never sailed before. Somewhere in the misty north it would cross the tracks of the German submarines and surface raiders on their way to the hunting grounds of the North Atlantic. Then, with the indifferent

midnight sun lighting its movements night and day, it would come within striking range of the Norwegian and Finnish bases. But if it got through, and if the Russians held, more convoys — more tanks, planes, guns, and munitions — would be sent over the same course to bolster the eastern front against Hitler.

We had slipped up the coast from Liverpool to a rendezvous in Scottish waters. The convoy now comprised six merchant ships. At the head rode a warship gaily camouflaged in green, blue, and white. Lashed to the decks of the merchant vessels were big crates containing British Hurricane and American Curtiss Tomahawk fighters, the first war material to be sent to the Soviets by any route. The *Llanstephan Castle* carried a fighter wing of the Royal Air Force whose task was to teach the Russians to assemble and fly the Hurricanes and help defend the northern warm-water port of Murmansk against attack by the Finns and Germans. There was also on board an American Army pilot, Lieutenant Hubert Zemke, of Missoula, Montana, who was assigned to teach the Russians to handle the Tomahawks, or P-40's as they were known in America.

The *Llanstephan Castle*, a survivor of the First World War, sailed with the dignity and self-assurance of a ship which had weathered many a storm, although she had been built for the run across the equator to South Africa and not for the Arctic. The usual notices about lifebelts in her small but comfortable cabins were in English and Afrikaans and her public rooms were heavily fortified with electric fans, which offered but little comfort on the course we were taking. But the six machine-gun turrets on the boat deck and the three-inch gun at the stern — even though it was of Japanese manufacture — looked as if they might prove useful.

No ship ever carried a heavier cargo of doubts and ques-

tionings, and mine were the least of all. In that golden summer, when England enjoyed a respite from bombing, the average Englishman began to think of matters which had never occupied his mind before — of private property and privilege, of wealth and poverty, of the causes and purposes of the war. These R.A.F. boys had not escaped this wave of self-questioning. They were going out to do their duty, as Englishmen always did, but the enlisted men and the non-commissioned officers especially were asking themselves whether it would be worth while or whether the kids they left behind would have to go through it again in twenty years. Even so, they had less to trouble their minds than the Polish contingent. Until two weeks before, the Polish government in exile had been at war with the Soviet Union. Now these stalwart Polish officers and diplomats, some of whom had fought the Bolsheviks in 1919 and 1920, were going out to Russia to carry on the war at the side of their former enemies. They would fight bravely, in the Polish tradition, but they would be wondering all the time whether Stalin would allow a free Poland to rise again after the war. The little Czech delegation, too, had its doubts, but it was harder to read the minds of these, the most stolid of all the Slavs. The leader, Colonel Berounsky of the Czechoslovak Air Force, had fought with the Czech Legion on its epic march across Siberia in 1918 and 1919. If he brought any scars out of that experience, he hid them well. Like the good soldier he was, he was going to fight by the side of his old enemies in the hope that a free nation would be restored in Bohemia's fields and meadows and in the forests and mountains of Slovakia and Ruthenia.

So you could go down the list of the five hundred souls on the *Llanstephan Castle* until you came to the ship's printer — and he had no doubts. For this gentle little Englishman, who was so eager to have us play his Russian-language records, was

a communist on his way to the Promised Land. He lived for the moment when he would see the shores of the Socialist Fatherland, and if only he could set foot on that sacred soil he would return like the pilgrim from Mecca assured of eternal happiness. Mrs. Charlotte Haldane, who was going to Russia for the London *Daily Sketch*, told him that he would only have to show the membership card of the British Communist Party and all doors would be opened to him. She was the wife of the famous British scientist and, if not a communist, was at least a fellow traveler, first class. Her doubts concerned the rest of us, the representatives of the bourgeoisie, but she never for a moment doubted that the Soviet régime would triumph over all its enemies.

## 2

That night when Scotland lay far astern, a chance conversation in the oak-paneled smoking-room struck the contrast between the world we were leaving and the world to which we were going.

Vernon Bartlett and I had settled down at a table with two British naval officers who had come aboard in Scotland. If I had to name one man of whom it could be said, 'This is an Englishman,' I would pick Vernon Bartlett. He had the honesty, the quiet sense of humor, and the love of good beer which are the marks of the true Briton. A liberal of the old school, he differed from many liberals in hating injustice at home as much as he hated it abroad. He was England's foremost broadcaster and one of her best-known diplomatic correspondents. Aroused by Chamberlain's appeasement policy, he had entered politics and beaten the Conservative political machine in a West of England constituency, entering Parliament as the first member elected on an anti-Munich platform.

The two officers had the single gold stripe of a sub-lieutenant on their sleeves. The younger one, a gunnery officer, could not have been more than twenty-eight. He was shy but he had the look of a lad, efficient at his job, whom you would be glad to have in charge of a gun crew if you ran into trouble. The other, a man of about forty-five, was an engineering officer. He had red hair, a narrow face, a thin nose, and a nasal voice. I was surprised to find that he had made a study of the life of Alexander Hamilton. We talked about *The Conqueror* by Gertrude Atherton, which I had read in high school, and then he went on to tell me about a great many books on Hamilton about which I knew nothing.

The younger man had been through the terrible air and naval battle which was fought around Crete in the spring.

'I was on board the *Imperial* — she was a destroyer,' he said. 'Our job was to stop the Germans on the sea. They were trying to reach Crete in all kinds of small boats. We ran onto a lot of them in the night and kept ramming their boats until the water was full of Germans. Then, before we knew it, the dive-bombers came over and one bomb got the *Imperial*. We had to swim for it, but I and a few of my mates climbed onto a raft from the old *Imperial* after we'd been swimming about among the Germans for a while. We never knew who was who in the dark.'

'Then what happened?'

'Well, we climbed up on the raft and we stayed there. Whenever a German tried to hang on we pushed him off. It wasn't nice but we had to do it — they'd have done it to us if we'd given them the chance. We drifted around for at least two hours before we came ashore in Crete. Some of our own blokes "captured" us, and they wouldn't let us go until they'd made damn well sure we weren't Huns.'

Both officers, we discovered, had joined the navy as enlisted

men and worked their way up from the lower deck to officer's rank. That did not happen very often. Britain chose her naval officers from the most promising sons of the best families. The army, too, drew its officers from the upper classes in peacetime. An officer in the army or navy almost had to have a 'public-school' education, and in England a 'public school' is a very private school reserved for the sons of the upper classes. The air force was more democratic. If a man could fly a plane or lead a squadron, his school and his accent did not matter.

The war did not have much effect upon the officers' corps of the navy because it was small, but the rapidly expanding army had to reach down into the lower classes for officer material. The results had been discouraging, not because the material was bad but because British tradition was against the innovation. Enlisted men in the army told me that they preferred to serve under upper-class officers. Promising young men from the lower classes, who had been sent to officers' training schools, confirmed this. Their men did not have confidence in them; they wanted their officers to come from the classes which had always led the British army.

Even so, I was surprised to hear these two naval men, who had risen from the lower deck, say that they did not believe in lower-class officers. Lord Louis Mountbatten, cousin of the King and a gallant destroyer commander who later became leader of the Commandos, was the idol of the younger man. His eyes glowed when he spoke about 'Louie.'

'Louie is the most popular officer in the service,' he said. 'He works his men to death and he's always looking for a fight. When a man goes aboard Louie's ship he knows he's going to see action. And the men like that.'

The older man nodded.

'That's it,' he said. 'It's the aristocrats like Mountbatten,

the men with a public-school education, who make the popular officers.'

'I'd rather serve under upper-class officers than under anybody who comes up from the lower deck,' continued the younger man. 'It's the aristocrats and chaps who have gone to a public school who inspire respect and confidence. They've been born and trained to lead.'

'Then wouldn't it be a good idea to give everybody a public-school education?' I asked.

'No!' shouted both officers together. I was too surprised to ask why, but Vernon, with what looked like an angry flush on his face, challenged the young sub-lieutenant.

'Aren't you ambitious? Do you intend to stay where you are all your life?' he asked.

'You bet I'm ambitious,' said the gunner with some spirit, 'and I want to go ahead. I've got a wife and two children depending on me.' Then he looked at the table and continued in a quieter voice. 'But I'll never have the confidence of those chaps who went to a public school and became leaders naturally. And I'll always know that the men under me won't have the same confidence in me that they have in those men.'

'But,' persisted Vernon, 'don't you feel that a man who has enough ability and character to work his way up from the lower deck inspires more genuine respect than officers who got their jobs because they have the right kind of accent?'

'Yes,' the young officer admitted hesitatingly. Then he raised his hands in a helpless gesture. 'But it's not in us — it's just not in us.'

Here, I felt, was the greatest danger to England, a far greater danger than Hitler. For this England could survive Hitler and yet lose the peace unless she could rid herself of the sterile class system which barred nine tenths of her people from the vocation of leadership.



# 3

## AMERICA, RUSSIA, AND THE R.A.F.

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### 1

EVERY man approached Russia in his own way, but Flight Lieutenant Conybeare had the strangest approach of all. The morning after we left Scotland Vernon Bartlett and I found him in the lounge poring over a large map of the Soviet Union and Asia. He was a reserve officer attached to the ground staff, a thin quiet man whose hair was beginning to turn gray.

‘I’m trying to figure out a line of retreat in case we suddenly have to leave Russia,’ he said, looking up from the map. There was nothing remarkable about that — very few on the ship thought that we would stay long in Russia.

Vernon pointed to the Near East.

‘You can go out through Turkey or Iran,’ he said. ‘That’s the shortest and easiest way.’

Conybeare shook his head and pointed to Mongolia and China.

'I rather hope we'll go out this way.' He paused for a moment, then added with a trace of shyness, 'I collect rhododendrons — China is a wonderful country for rhododendrons.'

Vernon was the first to recover, but then he knew these unpredictable fellow countrymen of his better than I did.

'Is that so?' he prompted. 'How very interesting.'

'Yes,' replied Conybeare. Then, seeing that we were sympathetic, he pointed again to the broad expanses of Mongolia. 'I'm told that the plains up here are just covered with dwarf rhododendrons in the spring. That must be a magnificent sight. And in the south — I mean in China — they have the finest examples of the tree types.'

'I've seen some splendid tree rhododendrons in the west of Ireland,' I put in.

Conybeare nodded.

'I know about the Irish rhododendrons,' he replied, 'but they're nothing like the tree rhododendrons in China.'

'Wouldn't it be just as well to retreat through Tibet?' asked Vernon.

'Oh no,' answered Conybeare quickly with a note of dismay in his voice. 'They have only two types in Tibet.'

'Quite obviously that's out,' agreed Vernon. He was actually becoming interested in rhododendrons.

'How did you happen to go in for rhododendrons?' he inquired.

'Oh, I started it long before the war. I grow them in tubs — the sweet-scented kind, you know. I had to leave them behind, of course. I wonder what will happen to them now.'

We left the warrior plotting the retreat to the rhododendron fields and went on deck.

## 2

The convoy was making eight or nine knots on a colorless sea under a cover of gray clouds. The six merchant ships sailed in two lines of three ships each while the escort vessels kept watch on the flanks. At the head of the line on the right sailed the *Llanstephan Castle*, the biggest ship in the convoy, her lifeboats lashed to the rail of the promenade deck and her gun crews at their posts. Behind her came a big gray freighter which followed us so faithfully day and night that we named it 'Bartlett's Conscience.'

With our lifebelts slung over our shoulders we climbed to the boat deck and watched the crew testing the two canvas box-kites which could be sent up fore and aft as protection against dive-bombers. A Whitley bomber on anti-submarine patrol circled the convoy and disappeared to the south. Then it was time for our Russian lesson.

Colonel 'Bomba' Lovell, one of the British Army's bomb-disposal experts, was taking an 'expeditionary force' of four men to Moscow. One of them, Sergeant McClorg, had been an instructor in Slavonic languages at the University of London. We put him to work morning and afternoon, teaching us the elements of Russian grammar and conversation. He did his job so well that by the time we reached Archangel I had a vocabulary of more than five hundred Russian words and phrases. I added to it as I traveled across Russia, and became convinced that Russian is not the difficult language it is generally supposed to be.

After that morning's lesson Vernon gave a talk on the war and the political outlook to the officers and men of the R.A.F. Wing. Looking somewhat like one of Palmer Cox's Brownies, he faced the crowded dining-room and talked of the Soviet position in the war and how important it was that Britain

should send the Soviets all the aid that could be spared from the mother country and the Near East. Then he assured them that a better England and a better world would come out of the war and that a new League of Nations, unhampered by selfish national interests, would keep watch over the peace settlement.

That caused trouble. The R.A.F. men gave him a great burst of applause, but as soon as it died down a big red-faced Scotch sergeant popped up and said:

'You told us we're going to have a better world after the war. Isn't that just the kind of stuff they told us during the last war?'

'Yes,' Vernon admitted, 'but this time people are thinking much more about the peace settlement than they were during the World War. All kinds of little clubs and organizations are discussing the changes that will have to be made in England when the war is over. You're talking about that yourselves. I think that a great deal of good will come out of all this discussion and that it will be very difficult for any British government to ignore the demand for reform.'

That did not satisfy the Scot. Clydeside, where he came from, was further to the left than any other section of the British Isles.

'How can we trust a government with all these Munich people in it to work for a better world?' he persisted.

Vernon tossed the ball back to him.

'It's the responsibility of men like you to keep an eye on the government,' he said. 'That's what democracy is for. You men will have to see that the government does not betray the League of Nations this time and that it carries out all the necessary reforms at home.'

Then they showered him with questions about the Soviet Union. It was obvious that the sergeants, corporals, and privates were sympathetic toward the Soviets. Did he think that

the British government would play fair with Russia or would it let the Russians down? Weren't the Russians right to attack Finland? Weren't they right to annex the Baltic states? Wouldn't it be a good thing to have Stalin at the peace conference?

## 3

The next day it was my turn. The men in gray-blue uniforms were packed around the tables. Some sat on their lifebelts on the floor and some even jammed the stairway at the far end. Behind me sat Commodore Dowding, the commander of the convoy, Mrs. Haldane, Bomba Lovell, Vernon, Major Richard Philipson, a little Irish doctor of the Royal Army Medical Corps, and Marion Strumillo, the financial counselor of the Polish Embassy in Moscow. Felix Topolski, the Polish artist, busily sketched the audience.

I knew why the crowd was there. These men who were going out to fight and perhaps to die in a strange land wanted to know where my country stood.

'I know the question you want me to answer,' I said at the outset. 'You want to know whether the United States is coming into the war and, if so, when. I don't know the answer to that question. If President Roosevelt were on this ship he couldn't answer it. Unless the Axis takes the initiative, it can be answered only by one hundred and thirty million people on the other side of the Atlantic who are now making up their minds. And if you feel that Americans take a long time to make up their minds, just remember how long it took you to make up yours.'

There were a few nods of agreement, and I went on. 'I told them about American policy toward the Axis and described how American diplomacy was trying to neutralize Japan. 'If

the United States makes a false move,' I pointed out, 'Japan may start a war in the South Pacific. That would mean a dissipation of the energies of the United States, Australia, and New Zealand, and of Britain as well.'

They were a sympathetic audience and their questions at the end suggested a friendly attitude toward the great neutral across the sea. They seemed to feel that America was a happier country than Britain, that its government was more democratic. They asked me if the American government could not devise a fairer system of food rationing than the one in Britain which allowed the rich to eat as much as they wished in the hotels and restaurants. They asked if the American system of government didn't work much faster than the British.

'Not always,' I replied. 'In fact, your system of government can work much more quickly than ours in some cases.'

There was a roar of derision.

'Well, look at the way your government declared war,' I argued. 'Chamberlain just called the House of Commons together that Sunday morning and told it that your country was at war. He didn't need the approval of Parliament. Now, in America, President Roosevelt could not declare war without the consent of Congress.'

That disturbed them. It was apparent that they were willing to trust the President to act at the appropriate moment but they had their doubts about Congress.

Then they tried to draw me into a discussion of British policy toward Russia.

'Didn't the British government try to trick the Russians in the negotiations for an alliance before the war?' asked the big Scotch sergeant.

'Wouldn't our government have let the Russians down if they had fought for Poland?' asked a red-haired corporal.

There were more questions like these. Then an officer jumped up and asked:

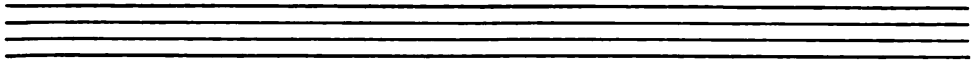
‘Isn’t it a well-known fact that the Russians deliberately double-crossed us?’

That question deserved some reflection. It had a direct bearing on the other questions in my mind. If the Soviets wantonly tricked the British and French, if they committed a shameful act from which other governments would have recoiled, it would be difficult in dealing with them after the war to establish that minimum of confidence which is needed for the conduct of international affairs. It would be naïve to hope that a country which had introduced a new kind of deceit into the ancient art of diplomacy could play a helpful part in the post-war settlement.

Let us see what did happen in those spring days of 1939 when Europe watched with mounting anxiety the plodding efforts of the statesmen to erect a dike against aggression and war.

# 4

## WAS IT A DOUBLE-CROSS?



### 1

THE Munich agreement of September, 1938, turned over to Hitler the mountain forts of Bohemia, brought 'peace with honor' to the England of Neville Chamberlain, and profoundly shocked the moral sensibilities of faraway America. Nowhere, however, did it produce more serious repercussions than in the Soviet Union.

On March 10, 1939, six months after Munich, Joseph Stalin reviewed the international situation in a speech to the eighteenth congress of the Soviet Communist Party. The second imperialist war was already under way, he said, and a new redivision of the world by means of war was imminent. A distinguishing feature of the new imperialist war, he continued, was that the non-aggressive states — though collectively



stronger than the aggressors — were making concession after concession to them and even conniving at their victories.

‘One might think that the districts of Czechoslovakia were yielded to Germany as the price of an undertaking to launch war on the Soviet Union,’ said the Soviet leader. Well, he went on, this policy of appeasing the aggressors might end in a ‘serious fiasco’ for its British and French authors. This was one of many warnings which passed unheeded in London and Paris. Then he dropped a hint: ‘We stand for peace and the strengthening of business relations with *all* countries.’ This was later acted upon in Berlin.

Five days after Stalin spoke, the German army occupied Bohemia and Moravia, and Hitler entered Prague. Czechoslovakia was dead. On that same afternoon Neville Chamberlain coolly faced the House of Commons and washed his hands of the Czechs. Although at Munich he had guaranteed the new frontiers of Czechoslovakia, he now declared that the guarantee no longer applied. ‘It is natural,’ he said, ‘that I should bitterly regret what has occurred. But finally, do not let us on that account be deflected from our course.’ The aim of the British government, he continued, remained unaltered — to substitute discussion for force in the settlement of disputes — and it would not lightly depart from this course. A suggestion by one member that Britain join the Soviet Union in a common front against aggression was ruled out by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir John Simon. It was clear that appeasement was to go on.

Chamberlain had badly misjudged the temper of Britain. In the House of Commons, in the press, and among the British people, the reaction to his speech was bad. There was, in fact, a revolt in the hitherto docile Conservative Party. Chamberlain became concerned and ceded a little — though not so much as some at first supposed. In a speech to the people of

his native city of Birmingham on March 17, he apologized for the 'somewhat cool and objective statement' he had made two days before. Although he defended the Munich treaty and the policy of appeasement, he asked what confidence could now be placed in German assurances and whether the occupation of Czechoslovakia was a step toward the domination of the world by force. And he promised to consult France, the British Dominions, and possibly some other countries about the problem of aggression. Consult, that was all.

This speech had a better reception than the one in Parliament, though the British people were still not satisfied. Poland and Danzig seemed to be next on Hitler's list. There were cries in Britain for a return to collective security, for negotiations with the Soviet Union. The political instinct of the British people, as I felt at the time, was sound. The prestige of Winston Churchill began to grow. Reports flowed into the Central Office of the Conservative Party in London that the country was in revolt against appeasement. These had their effect on the Prime Minister, but what probably influenced him most of all was a despairing wail from Conservative headquarters in Birmingham that no one could be found in his own home town to say a kind word for his foreign policy.

Sensing a threat to his leadership, Chamberlain lost his head. In his speech at Birmingham he had said, 'I am not prepared to engage this country by new and unspecified commitments operating under conditions which cannot now be foreseen.' He obviously meant it, because he subsequently proposed to Poland that the British and Polish governments should merely issue a statement to say that they were 'consulting.' Now, without asking the advice of his general staff, without approaching potential allies like the Soviets, he suddenly guaranteed the independence of Poland. This was not only a new commitment; it permitted Poland to call Britain into war

under circumstances which could not be foreseen. 'When we gave a guarantee to Poland, the matter was imminent,' he said after the outbreak of war. If that was true, and if he was really thinking of Poland's security and not his own, he acted very strangely, for he did not immediately open military conversations with the Poles. In fact, a British military mission did not go to Warsaw until three and a half months later. And all through the summer the British Treasury haggled with the Poles over a small armament loan.

David Lloyd George and a few others were alarmed by the guarantee, but the public hailed what it believed to be the first step in the creation of a solid front against aggression. On April 8 Italy invaded Albania. Labor and Liberal members of Parliament urged the Prime Minister to denounce the Anglo-Italian agreement of 1938 and close the door on further appeasement of Mussolini. Chamberlain refused, but gave the public what it seemed to like by guaranteeing Rumania and Greece. Again, the problem of how to fulfill these pledges did not seem to worry him.

Three days after Hitler entered Prague, Litvinov had proposed a conference of the peace-loving powers to discuss concerted measures against aggression. The British government replied that the proposal was 'premature.' Now, however, the British people demanded an extension of the front against aggression. Labor and Liberal spokesmen pointed out in Parliament that the guarantees to Poland and Rumania could not possibly be redeemed without Soviet cooperation. Rather reluctantly, it seemed, Chamberlain yielded to this pressure and on April 15 sent his first proposals to Moscow. He had previously assured the Poles that he would do nothing contrary to their wishes.

A month had passed since Hitler entered Prague. Almost every step away from appeasement had been taken under pres-

sure. Influential Conservatives were demanding that those proved champions of collective security, Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden, be given posts in the Cabinet, but Chamberlain would not have them. The men who were most closely identified with appeasement in China, Ethiopia, Spain, and Czechoslovakia remained in his inner cabinet. Sir Horace Wilson, who never ceased to work for an agreement with Germany, continued to be his closest adviser. It was true that the Prime Minister had given pledges to three smaller powers, but collective security was more than paper guarantees. The Soviet leaders might reasonably ask themselves whether the old man who had sneered at the collective efforts of fifty nations to halt the Ethiopian war had now suddenly become converted to the collective system.

## 2

If they had hoped for such a conversion, they were quickly disabused. The British suggested that their pledges to Poland and Rumania were equivalent to a guarantee of the western frontier of the Soviet Union. Therefore, they proposed, the Soviets should reciprocate by promising to come to the assistance of Britain and France if they went to war for Poland and Rumania.

At first glance these proposals seemed to be the essence of sweet reasonableness. But even a country which had less reason than the Soviet Union to distrust Neville Chamberlain would have found a few jokers on closer examination. As Litvinov pointed out, a guarantee to two or three countries was an invitation to the aggressors to attack others. In particular, he indicated, it was an invitation to attack the Baltic States (including Finland). These countries had not received a guarantee from the western powers and they covered a long

and important stretch of the Soviet frontier. The British, however, had made a much more important omission. The Soviets were to go to the aid of the British, but the British proposals said nothing about going to the aid of the Soviets. The Soviets assumed new and heavy liabilities but they received nothing in return. If the Germans entered the Baltic States and then attacked Leningrad, the British did not have to move. If Hitler coerced Poland or Rumania into marching with him against the Soviets, the British had nothing to do with the case. If the Germans actually attacked Poland or Rumania and overran them and then invaded the Soviet Union, the British could say 'Thank you' to the Soviets and drop out of the war.

Here was a point which was little understood by the general public. Although Chamberlain skillfully created the impression that he was seeking an alliance with Russia, he would not even discuss the principle of mutual assistance until the end of May.

'Neither Britain nor France was in a position to render any effective immediate aid to Poland if she were attacked by Germany's overwhelmingly powerful air force and highly mechanized army,' wrote Sir Nevile Henderson, the British Ambassador to Berlin, in *The Failure of a Mission*. Neither was in any better position to give aid to Rumania. How then had they guaranteed the Soviet frontiers? Later events showed that the Germans could have been across Poland and on the Soviet border in three weeks. Would the men of Munich in London and Paris have done any more for the Soviets than they did for their Polish ally?

No responsible government in any country could have accepted the British proposals or anything like them. The Soviets, rightly or wrongly, concluded that the British plan was not a departure from the Munich policy but an extension

of it. Here, they said, are the British still trying to maneuver us into a war with Germany. They want us to go to the aid of Poland and then they will sit behind the Maginot Line and laugh at us.

It took Litvinov only two days to snap back his counter-proposals. First of all, he suggested, Britain, France, and the Soviet Union should conclude a defensive alliance to which smaller countries could adhere if they wished. Then the three powers should jointly guarantee not only Poland and Rumania but the Baltic States. Finally, the Soviet, British, and French general staffs should draw up a military convention laying down exactly what each would do in the event of aggression. All through the negotiations the Soviets stood by these three points. The two difficulties which remained unsettled when the negotiations broke down in August were elaborations of points two and three — one of them a very substantial elaboration.

The British, on their side, stood pat until the end of May. Which side had the better case? Let us accept the judgment of the three men in England whose knowledge of foreign affairs was unsurpassed. Churchill, Eden, and Lloyd George warned the government that an alliance with the Soviets was the only way to prevent war and urged Chamberlain to accept the Soviet plan.

### 3

The first exchanges had shown a fundamental difference of purpose. The Soviets, it seemed clear, wanted an alliance so strong that it would deter Hitler from further aggression and prevent war. They were not interested in a haphazard distribution of paper guarantees which would not only fail to prevent war but make the Soviet Union the principal battle-

ground. Chamberlain's purpose was harder to fathom. He obviously did not want an alliance, because he would not even discuss that point until the end of May. His immediate aim seemed to be to relieve himself from the pressure of public opinion. But what was his ultimate aim? If he declined to make any commitments to the Soviets, the door was obviously open for that broad agreement with Germany which as late as the afternoon of March 15 had been his fondest ambition. The Soviets suspected that he was trying to use them to scare Hitler into such an agreement. Later developments greatly strengthened these suspicions.

As I made the rounds of the government departments and foreign embassies those spring days, I could not convince myself that the negotiations had a basis in reality. Although I was more exposed to the British and French point of view than to the Soviet arguments, I could not help feeling that there was something questionable about Chamberlain's intentions and tactics. If he really wanted to check German aggression, if he really desired a workable accord with the Soviets, he was proceeding in a most peculiar way. Was it possible that he was trying to gain time in the hope that something might turn up from Berlin?

My feeling that the Prime Minister was not being completely frank with his public was strengthened by developments during the May session of the League Council. Lord Halifax and Georges Bonnet, the British and French Foreign Ministers, and Ivan Maisky, the Soviet Ambassador in London, were to meet in Geneva. The British and French governments hinted that everything would quickly be settled. I therefore flew to Geneva to cover the great event.

It soon became apparent to me, however, that the differences were as great as ever. On every little issue which arose in the Council, Maisky took pains to differ from Halifax and

Bonnet. And in their private conversations, I learned, no progress was made. Nevertheless, on May 24, diplomatic correspondents in London and Paris were informed that the British government had decided to accept the Soviet terms and a pact was therefore assured. The British and French newspapers and just about every correspondent in Geneva, except me, proclaimed that everything was settled. The United Press clients in South America complained that I had been 'scooped.' It was a 'scoop' worth missing. Although the British reply to Moscow at the end of May did mark a step forward, it turned out to be far from an acceptance of the Soviet plan. By his advance publicity, however, Chamberlain had put himself in a position to say to the British public: 'Well, you see, I've done my best. I've given those Russians everything they asked and now they don't want it.' If he was merely trying to fool his public, that was a clever maneuver; if he wanted a pact with Russia, it was madness.

## 4

It was early in May, I believe, that the Germans made their first offer to Stalin. Commercial negotiations had been going on for some time, but I never have been able to find any evidence that political talks started earlier. Two things are certain: first, that the Germans took the initiative, and second, that no serious discussions took place until after the retirement of Litvinov from the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs on May 3. Another point is fairly certain: the Soviets were noncommittal to the first German offer. They did not accept it or even enter into formal negotiations — but they did not slam the door.

In the first week of May the German press received instructions to be nice to Russia and particularly to Premier Molotov,



who had taken the portfolio of Foreign Affairs. The Soviet Ambassador in Berlin was received by Joachim von Ribbentrop, the German Foreign Minister and author of the Anti-Comintern Pact. At the same time the Soviet military attaché conferred with some of the highest German generals. The Ambassador and military attaché then left for Moscow. The Germans, it seems, had made their first proposal. They were suggesting a partition of Poland but, as far as I know, nothing was said about the Baltic States or Bessarabia. There was a lapse of several months. Then at the end of July or beginning of August, the Germans took advantage of the difficulties in the Anglo-Soviet negotiations to make a fresh offer. Toward the middle of August the real negotiations on details began and were pushed to a speedy conclusion.

As early as May 7, the British and French governments knew that the Germans had approached the Soviets. On that date, as the French *Yellow Book* discloses, Robert Coulondre, the French Ambassador in Berlin, reported a conversation with a German informant who predicted that Hitler would make an agreement with Russia and that Poland would be partitioned. Sir Nevile Henderson got wind of the German move at the same time, and Coulondre's information also was passed on to the British government. 'The hope that collusion between Germany and Russia would one day enable the Reich to deliver a mortal blow to the world power of the British Empire may have been strengthened these past few days in Herr von Ribbentrop's mind by the difficulties encountered in the Anglo-Soviet negotiations,' Coulondre wrote again on May 22. '... At this moment when the Anglo-Franco-Russian negotiations appear to be entering a decisive phase, we should keep this situation clearly in mind and remember the advantage which the Reich will strive to obtain to the detriment of France and Great Britain, from any failure, no matter how veiled, in the conversations with Moscow.'

Thus, three months before the Soviet-German pact was signed, the western powers were warned of the consequences if they failed to meet Stalin's terms.

Was it dishonorable of Stalin to receive secret proposals from the Germans while he was openly negotiating with the British? Only if it was dishonorable of Chamberlain to make secret approaches to the Germans while he was openly negotiating with the Russians.

Neville Chamberlain was in a number of ways his father's son. Joseph Chamberlain made a large fortune in the screw business in Birmingham. Neville took over the business and proved an admirable screw manufacturer. The father started his political career in the municipal government of Birmingham and vigorously attacked the slum conditions which had sprung up during the Industrial Revolution. The son also went from business to the Birmingham City Council and then, in the position of Mayor, carried out many noteworthy municipal reforms. In international affairs, Joseph Chamberlain was an outspoken critic of Russia. For three years he worked secretly for an Anglo-German alliance. The Kaiser and his Chancellor, Prince von Bülow, feared that the British were trying to embroil Germany in a war with Russia, and they parried the offer. Neville Chamberlain inherited his father's distrust of Russia and it was deepened by a business man's fear of communism. For three years he worked for a broad Anglo-German agreement, sometimes openly, sometimes secretly. What he may have had in mind may be gauged from the fact that the word 'alliance' more than once crept into the conversation of his ambassador with the German leaders. Again, the Germans were wary.

Soon after Neville Chamberlain became Prime Minister, he tried unsuccessfully to lure the German Foreign Minister, Baron von Neurath, to London. He then resorted to one of

those undignified subterfuges to which he was addicted. A hunting exhibition was to be held in Berlin in November, 1937. So Lord Halifax was sent to Germany — not as a member of the British Cabinet, of course, but in a private and unofficial capacity as a Master of Foxhounds. Figuratively crying ‘Tallyho!’ his Lordship flew to Berlin, visited the exhibition and then treed his fox at Berchtesgaden. The fox, however, was no more flattered than foxes normally are by the attentions of fox-hunters.

Chamberlain was not discouraged. As early as May, 1938, he put himself on Germany’s side in the artificially created ‘Czech crisis.’ In September he made three visits to Germany and sent Sir Horace Wilson on a fourth. The Prime Minister came back from Munich with high hopes of achieving an eventual accord with Hitler. The occupation of Prague did not completely shatter these hopes, though it obliged him to go more cautiously for a time.

In April, 1939, however, appeasement again came to the fore. While negotiating, or appearing to negotiate, with the Russians, Chamberlain put out one feeler after another for an understanding with Hitler. The British government granted *de facto* recognition to the puppet government of Slovakia and tried to recognize *de facto* the German annexation of Bohemia and Moravia. With the approval of Britain, the League Secretariat suppressed an appeal from former President Beneš of Czechoslovakia after the occupation of Prague and another from Albania at the time of the Italian invasion. Chamberlain refused to protest or act when, in violation of the Anglo-Italian treaty, Italian and German war material was left in Spain. He remained calm in the face of Japanese indignities to British citizens in China and worked out a formula with Tokio which implied that Britain accepted Japan’s ‘New Order.’ On April 24, Henderson, who had been recalled from

Berlin after the occupation of Prague, returned secretly to his post and resumed his efforts for an Anglo-German understanding. Then the British government allowed the Bank of England to turn over to Germany \$25,000,000 in gold which belonged to the National Bank of Czechoslovakia. And week after week the British Treasury haggled with the Polish government over an armament loan of \$25,000,000.

Churchill and Eden remained outside the Cabinet. The Prime Minister clung to his Munich cronies. All through the late spring and early summer, he and his associates, while reaffirming their determination to resist aggression, told Germany in their public speeches that she could obtain a great deal without aggression. Although they repeatedly evinced a desire for an understanding with Germany, they did not once express publicly any ardent wish for an accord with the Soviets. Their references to the Soviet Union were mostly of a negative kind: the government had no objection in principle to an agreement with Russia, no ideological considerations would be allowed to stand in the way, and so forth.

The public offers to Germany culminated on June 29 in a remarkable speech by Lord Halifax. While emphasizing Britain's determination to fulfill her guarantees, the Foreign Secretary said that the government was ready to cooperate with other governments in the peaceful revision of the *status quo*. 'In such a new atmosphere,' he added, 'we could examine the colonial problem, questions of raw materials, trade barriers, the issue of *Lebensraum*, the limitation of armaments and any other issue that affects the lives of all European citizens.' *Lebensraum* meant more territory for Germany on the continent of Europe. It connoted particularly the Soviet Ukraine. The Soviets took note.

Then one of many secret approaches to Germany became known. In the middle of July, Helmuth Wohlthat, economic

adviser to General Goering, came to London, ostensibly for a whaling conference. Robert S. Hudson, head of the Department of Overseas Trade and a cabinet minister, put before him suggestions for a broad settlement with Germany including, as Hudson later admitted, 'long-term credits on a huge scale.' In financial circles it was said that Hudson had suggested an international loan of one billion pounds sterling (roughly \$5,000,000,000). I cabled the first story of this scheme, only to have it denied and ridiculed. Then Hudson admitted it was true. In Parliament, Chamberlain deplored the leak but did not rebuke Hudson. Again the Soviets took note.

They also learned something about Henderson's activities in Berlin. The British government, of course, did not tell them about the Ambassador's secret conversations, but the German government may have been more obliging. In a book which was carefully edited by the British Foreign Office, Henderson later admitted that during the summer months he pleaded with members of Hitler's entourage for a chance to open negotiations. 'I did my utmost in these numerous conversations,' he wrote, 'to enlist the support of those most closely in touch with Hitler, with a view to inducing him to make some gesture which would open the door, if it were only an inch or so, for a response on Mr. Chamberlain's part.' Hitler, however, would not give Chamberlain an opening.

Henderson persisted. At the end of July he went to the Wagner Festival at Bayreuth hoping that the Führer would see him and give him a chance to speak his piece. Hitler ignored him. When he finally saw Hitler on August 28 — only three days before the outbreak of the war — he told the Chancellor, in answer to a question, that he personally still did not exclude the possibility of an Anglo-German alliance.

Henderson works up a certain amount of moral indignation against the Soviets for making a pact with Germany. His in-

dignation is understandable, for they succeeded where he failed. But moral condemnation seems out of place. If it was proper for him to seek an accord with Germany while his country was openly negotiating with Russia, it was proper for the Soviets to do the same. Their moral position was, if anything, stronger than Britain's. The Soviet Union had not taken the initiative in seeking an agreement with either Britain or Germany. The British, on the other hand, had taken the initiative first in Moscow and then in Berlin.

Historians, however, are not likely to condemn Stalin and Chamberlain on moral grounds. It is a cardinal principle of diplomacy that a nation must have an alternative policy to fall back on if its primary policy fails. Both Stalin and Hitler respected this principle; Chamberlain ignored it or did not understand it. For years, Stalin's primary policy had been the creation of an effective coalition against the fascist powers. Now Hitler had presented him with an attractive alternative if the democracies would not give him what he wanted. Hitler, on his part, was determined to get Poland. This would require the neutralization of the Soviets. A pact with Russia therefore became his primary aim. He did not have to worry about an alternative; if all else failed, Chamberlain was always waiting on his doorstep with offers of colonies, raw materials, loans, *Lebensraum*, and possibly an alliance. Between these two superb schemers stood the poor befuddled screw manufacturer from Birmingham. An Anglo-German agreement had been his dearest ambition, and it was a legitimate ambition. But he could not realize that Hitler's refusal to talk and the opposition of the British people made this unattainable. Under somewhat similar conditions, his father had swallowed his prejudices and turned frankly to Russia and France. Neville Chamberlain had no choice but to swing around, too, and make his primary objective an alliance with Russia. But instead of playing the

Soviet card for all it was worth he played it as a very poor second choice and clung stubbornly to a primary policy which was dead. Thus he lost everything.

History will not render a moral judgment against Chamberlain because he sought an agreement with Germany. If he could have made an accord which brought security to the British Empire for a long period, he would have won the praise of historians as well as of his contemporaries. History will condemn him principally for being inept. Stalin will be judged by the same standards. Historians will want to know whether he made the choice which was in the best interests of his people. Did he?

## 5

Each day during the early summer Hitler grew more menacing to Poland. At the end of May the British had agreed 'in principle' to discuss the Soviet proposal of an alliance, but they still ignored the Soviets' second point, the guarantee to the Baltic States. In the apparent hope of speeding negotiations, the Soviets intimated that Halifax would be welcome in Moscow. Halifax had gone to Berlin in 1937, Chamberlain had gone to Germany three times in 1938, and both had gone to Rome at the beginning of 1939. William Strang, an official of the Foreign Office, who had displeased the Soviets while he was Counselor of the British Embassy in Moscow, was finally sent to Russia. The Soviets took note. Was Halifax being kept in reserve for another fox-hunt?

Now the British took another step forward and agreed 'in principle' to a joint guarantee of the Baltic States. But when the discussion of details began, the Soviets raised the issue of 'indirect aggression.' They wanted the right to intervene not only if Hitler openly invaded the Baltic countries but also if he

tried to win them by fifth-column methods. On the exact details of the Soviet demand both sides have kept silence, but the Russians must have implied that they wished to have bases and garrisons in the Baltic republics. This was what they later got from Hitler.

This issue of indirect aggression is the basis for the charge by Henderson and others that Stalin raised his demands as the negotiations progressed. Here, perhaps for the first time, Chamberlain could reasonably find fault with the Russian attitude. Although the demand was an elaboration of one of the original Soviet points, it was a very substantial elaboration. The British government had secretly promised the Baltic governments, as it had promised Poland, that it would do nothing contrary to their wishes. Now it argued with the Soviets that it could not intervene in the internal affairs of these states or condone intervention by others. No doubt, Chamberlain and his Conservative associates could not bring themselves to agree to anything which would strengthen the strategic position of Communist Russia. But on this issue they had sounder reasons than mere anti-Soviet prejudice. The world had been shocked when Chamberlain delivered part of Czechoslovakia to Nazi Germany; what would it say if Britain now delivered the Baltic States to Communist Russia? In America, particularly, British prestige would have fallen below the Munich level.

The Russians also had their arguments. At that very moment Hitler was pouring 'tourists' into Danzig. What good was it to guarantee countries against invasion, the Soviets reasoned, and then allow Hitler to take them by subversive methods? What we are trying to do, they argued, is to prevent a world war, and minor considerations must not stand in the way. Privately they asked why Chamberlain should now have scruples about the rights of small countries. Britain and France had extended the Locarno guarantees to Switzerland



and the Netherlands without consulting their governments. The Chamberlain government had intervened directly in Czechoslovakia and Spain for the benefit of fascism and to the detriment of peace. Why should it now hesitate to strengthen peace by giving the Russians a free hand in the Baltic States?

With our present knowledge of fifth columnists and Quislings, it is easy to say that the Soviets had a very good case. It is easy to say that anything was better for everyone concerned, including the Baltic countries, than what eventually happened. But the question is whether Chamberlain and his colleagues, with the knowledge available at the time, could have made a wiser choice.

Let us fall back on the judgment of Winston Churchill, a Conservative himself, and as staunch an enemy of communism as any member of the Cabinet. Early in June, before the issue of indirect aggression had become acute, he indorsed the Russian demand for a guarantee to the Baltic States and, on his own initiative, raised the question of fifth-column activities. 'It is certain . . . that if Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia were invaded by the Nazis *or subverted to the Nazi system by propaganda and intrigue from within*, the whole of Europe would be dragged into war. . . . Why not then concert in good time, publicly and courageously, the measures which may render such a fight unnecessary?'

## 6

The sands were running out. Late in July the German campaign of hate against Poland was mounting to a climax. Intelligence reports to London and Paris described the flow of German troops from the west and south of Germany to the Polish frontier. Again with the apparent aim of speeding the negotiations, Molotov invited Britain and France to send mili-

tary missions to work out the military convention parallel with the political discussions. The peace of Europe and the security of the British and French Empires were at stake. It seemed obvious that the chiefs of staff should go, but Chamberlain and Daladier chose a number of little-known generals and admirals. They left for Russia by ship, instead of by plane, and reached Moscow only on August 11. By that time, it appeared, Hitler was so far committed to an attack on Poland that only the threat of overwhelming force would stop him.

The Soviet military mission was composed of the outstanding men in the army, navy, and air force, led by Marshal Voroshilov. At the outset, the Soviets discovered that the British and French representatives had no power to conclude an agreement. On August 15 Voroshilov outlined his proposals for Soviet help to Poland in fulfillment of the guarantee which Britain had asked the Soviets to give. The Poles were to meet the German center while the Red Army entered Poland on the two flanks, through Vilna in the north and Lemberg in the south. Thus the Russians would counter the northern and southern arms of the German pincers with their mechanized and motorized forces. It looked like a good plan to cope with the enveloping movement which the Germans later employed to destroy Poland's army.

The British and French missions had no authority to accept the proposal, so they referred it to their governments. The governments consulted Warsaw. The Polish government replied that it would not allow Soviet troops to enter Polish territory, it did not require Soviet aid, and it was adequately prepared to face a German attack without it. On August 20, the British and French governments informed the Soviets of the Polish reply and declined to urge the Poles to change their minds.

The Polish attitude was understandable. Russia was Po-

land's traditional enemy and the Poles feared that if the Russians came they would never leave. They also dreaded the influence of communism and the effect of Soviet infiltration on the White Russian and Ukrainian populations of eastern Poland.

The British and French attitude, however, is hard to understand. On April 15 they had asked the Soviets to help them defend Poland. Now, after four months of tortuous negotiations, they were telling the Soviets that they must not defend Poland. They had approached Moscow because only the Soviets could give the Poles effective aid. Now they were ruling out this aid. Unless the British and French were completely insincere when they guaranteed Poland, and again when they approached the Soviets, this attitude is hard to explain. Their position was reduced to an absurdity.

Chamberlain, to be sure, had promised the Poles that he would do nothing against their wishes. Here again, however, the lack of purpose behind his pledges was revealed. 'The guarantee should not have been accorded except on the condition that Poland was prepared to be guided by British advice in her relations with the U.S.S.R.,' wrote Arthur Berriedale Keith, one of the soundest of British authorities on international affairs, in *The Causes of the War*. At the time, Lloyd George, too, declared that the British government should compel Poland to accept Soviet aid.

In order to understand what the British and French attitude meant to the Russians let us reconstruct the circumstances in the western hemisphere. Let us suppose that Germany is located between the southern frontier of Mexico and the northern frontier of Brazil. To the south lie Britain and France. Germany openly covets the oil fields of Texas and the wheat-fields of the American Southwest. Britain and France, to all appearances, have been encouraging the Germans to make a

bid for them. The Germans start a campaign of hate against Mexico. For reasons best known to themselves, Britain and France give a guarantee to Mexico, a guarantee which they cannot redeem. Then they turn to the United States, whom they have hitherto been ignoring, and say: 'We want you to help us defend Mexico. If Germany attacks Mexico, we will all declare war. You may send munitions to the Mexicans, and with their kind permission and ours, you may even be permitted to drop a few bombs on the Germans. But you must not send troops into Mexico because the Mexicans would not like that. Of course, when the Germans cross the Rio Grande, you may use your army to defend yourself.'

This was the best the British and French governments could offer after four months of bargaining — and a new world war was in the offing! How would the United States government have reacted to such a 'peace front'?

If the Russians had ever had any doubts, everything was now clear to them. Chamberlain did not want to save Poland or stop Hitler — the only way to do that (and the German effort to neutralize Russia proved it) was to let Hitler know that he would meet the Red Army on the plains of Poland. The scrap of paper which Chamberlain was offering the Soviets could serve only one purpose — to draw the Soviet Union into war with Germany. So reasoned the Russians.

Upon receiving the British and French reply, the Soviets broke off negotiations. Three days later, on August 23, they signed a pact with Germany.

7

It was not the Polish attitude, however, or the issue of indirect aggression which caused the breakdown. 'The trouble did not lie in particular formulas or clauses,' said Molotov.

'No, the trouble was much more serious.' The real trouble was Chamberlainism.

Throughout the long negotiations the Soviets had shown exemplary patience. The political talks (not counting the military conversations) took one hundred and four days. The Soviets, according to their own estimate, used twenty days to prepare and deliver their proposals, the British and French took the remaining eighty-four. Hitler seemed about to launch his attack on Poland. Stalin had to act fast.

The original German offer to Russia had been renewed and improved upon. German hopes were beginning to rise in August, but as late as August 15 Ambassador Coulondre reported on the pessimism in the German Foreign Office. Once again he urged the French government to speed the conclusion of the pact with Russia. 'I can never repeat too often how important a psychological factor this is for the Reich,' he wrote. On August 18 he again warned Paris, 'It is imperative to bring the Russian negotiations to a satisfactory conclusion as soon as possible.'

Warnings and recommendations like this had little effect on the British and French governments. They also ignored repeated warnings from the Soviet side. Time and again, Ambassador Maisky told the British that the Soviets would accept nothing less than an effective alliance against aggression. The retirement of Litvinov in May was a clear warning that the Soviets would turn to their alternative policy if Chamberlain and Daladier did not want collective security. At the end of May, Molotov, in a very frank speech, warned the western powers that the Soviet government was tired of appeasement. Finally, on June 29, after many indications of impatience and dissatisfaction had been given by the Soviet press, Andrey Zhdanov gave the most outspoken warning of all. He was the head of the Communist Party in Leningrad, a member of the

ten-man Politbureau which runs the Soviet Union, and a possible successor to Stalin. 'It seems to me,' he wrote in *Pravda*, 'that the British and French do not desire a real treaty acceptable to the U.S.S.R., but only talks about a treaty in order to suggest to their public opinion that the U.S.S.R. has adopted an unyielding attitude and thus make it easier for themselves to deal with the aggressors. *The next few days must show whether or not this is so.*'

Some of Stalin's critics have maintained that he really preferred a pact with Hitler from the start, and they cite his hint of March 10 as evidence. These repeated warnings, however, cast some doubt on this theory. If Stalin wanted to maneuver Hitler into a bargain, would he have let him know time and again that he was not getting what he wanted from Britain and France? The Soviets used just the opposite tactics to maneuver Germany into the Rapallo Treaty in 1922. Although their negotiations with Lloyd George were going badly, the Soviet delegates to the Genoa conference conveyed the opposite impression to the Germans. Alarmed by the prospect of a Russian *rapprochement* with the western powers, the Germans hurriedly signed a treaty with the Soviets.

What choice did Stalin have when the negotiations with the western powers reached an impasse in the middle of August?

On the one hand he could sign an unsatisfactory agreement with Britain and France — supposing, of course, that Chamberlain was willing to sign anything at all. This would not save Poland or prevent war. The Soviets would have to stand with arms folded while the Germans pushed across Poland to the Soviet frontier (a matter of three weeks). Then they could only hope that the men of Munich in London and Paris would prove reliable allies (they gave no help to Poland). And the Soviet Union would have to stand by while Hitler's fifth column undermined the Baltic Republics (there were strong German and pro-German elements in all these countries).

On the other hand, Stalin could accept Hitler's offer. This had its disadvantages but it would give him a new defensive zone in the west (it actually saved Leningrad and Moscow in 1941). It would also give him time to reorganize the Red Army and Soviet industry (it gave him almost two years and he took the fullest advantage of this respite).

It has been said that Stalin had a third choice. He might have struck a lofty moral pose and said, 'A plague on both your houses.' This, however, was not practical politics. It would not have saved Poland or prevented war. It would have offended both sides, instead of only one, and it might have provided just the stimulus required for a *rapprochement* between Berlin, London, and Paris.

Some of Stalin's critics have said that he always had a sneaking admiration for Hitler and his ways. Some have argued that the Soviet régime had gone fascist, others that the Nazi régime had gone Bolshevik, and thus they came together. Still others have speculated that Stalin wanted above all things a European war so that a neutral Soviet Union could gather the spoils.

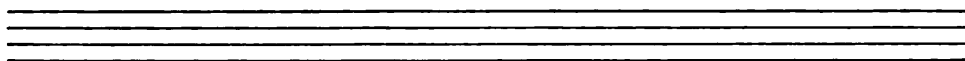
I have no way of telling what was in Stalin's heart and mind. It is possible that we shall eventually obtain documentary evidence to support some of the contentions of his critics. The British government prepared a *White Paper* on the negotiations, but finally decided not to publish it. The documents in this collection, when they are eventually put at the disposal of historians, may well make a better case for the British than I have been able to construct with the evidence available today. The German and French archives may also yield information which will shed new light on Stalin's character and intentions. But such new information is not likely to alter one salient point which seems amply supported by all the present evidence — that Chamberlain never offered Stalin anything which the

government of a great power could accept. This evidence — the statements in Parliament, the official communiqués, the information gathered by correspondents at the time, the direct and indirect references to the negotiations in the French *Yellow Book*, the British *Blue Book*, the German *White Book*, and Henderson's memoirs — all this evidence tends to show that no responsible statesman in Stalin's position could have made any other choice, because there was no other choice. 'The result was inevitable,' wrote that patriotic and discerning Briton, Arthur Berriedale Keith. The Soviet-German pact was the bitter and inescapable fruit of Chamberlainism.



# 5

## RUSSIA'S BURMA ROAD



### 1

A CATALINA flying-boat came out of the north, banked over the convoy, and went on toward the south. The range of this type of patrol-bomber is so great that it gave us no clue to our position, and the officers of the *Llanstephan Castle* said nothing to enlighten us. All we knew was that we were nearing the Arctic.

We sailed for several days on a sea of tropical blue, with shoals of spouting whales and schools of porpoises around us. Then late one afternoon we sighted an island with a snow-topped mountain whose sheer gray sides rose out of the sea.

‘The sunset on that mountain will be something to watch for,’ remarked Commodore Dowding as he came down from the bridge for dinner.

In the dining-room we discussed the news which had just

been broadcast from London. The Germans had crossed the Dnieper north of Kiev and were threatening to encircle Marshal Budyonny's army in the southern Ukraine. The threat to Leningrad was increasing. It was one of those moments when many wondered whether we were on a wild-goose chase. Hitler still wore the halo of invincibility.

When we went on deck after dinner, the snow-topped mountain lay far astern. The flaming sun moved slowly down until it seemed to rest on the horizon. Behind us lay a sea of green, the green of Venetian glass, and in the distance, against a tremulous sky, rose the mountain, its flanks draped in Tyrian purple and its snowy summit tinged with rosy light. Suddenly the sun dropped below the sea. A molten glow spread along the western horizon and a low line of clouds burst into flame. To the south a great echelon of clouds turned rose, then carmine, and then dripped purple. A solitary flying-boat ventured into the molten regions of the west and was lost.

The ships drew closer together. Slowly the sky purified itself until it was crystal-clear, like an evening sky in the high Alps. To the north a cold star gleamed. Far behind us the snowy peak of the mountain hovered in the gathering mist like a phantom.

The next day we learned that we were well above the Arctic Circle. It grew cold. The herring gulls had left us days before, and now the few kittiwake gulls which had been skimming the waves around us disappeared. We plunged into a fog bank and wallowed through fog for most of the day. The leading ships in the two lines were trailing fog-buoys, little floats which raised a feather of foam a hundred yards astern to guide the next ship on its course.

This was Russia's Burma Road, as vital to her defense as that narrow, winding ribbon at the other end of the world was to China's. Over this route would have to come the planes,

tanks, and munitions to balance the arms which Hitler was drawing from Czechoslovakia, Belgium, the Netherlands, and occupied France. Untamed rivers, floods, lofty ranges of mountains, malaria and other plagues, and an occasional bomber were the enemies on the road into China. Here the convoys would have to face the midnight sun in summer, the Arctic cold in winter, and U-boats, surface raiders, torpedo planes, and dive-bombers all year round.

Late in the afternoon we came out of the fog as suddenly as we had entered it and sailed across an unblemished sea as blue and as sunny as the Mediterranean. Standing on the boat-deck after sunset, it was not hard to believe in a spherical world. To the north, the sea appeared to run uphill from the side of the ship and then curve off over the horizon, beyond which was limitless space.

Commodore Dowding, a veteran skipper of the P. and O. Line, came down from the bridge and joined Vernon Bartlett and me for a few minutes.

'I don't like this weather,' he remarked.

We were surprised. It seemed unlikely that submarines would venture near the convoy while visibility was so good and the surface so calm.

'I'm not worried about submarines,' said the Commodore. 'Our escort can handle them. It's the planes that may cause trouble. We can deal with them, too, but I wish the fog would settle down and stay with us all the way from now on.'

Another day and he had his wish. The Arctic fog engulfed us. The convoy moved silently over a slate-gray sea. At times a curtain of mist hid the escort vessels. Then it lifted, revealing the little warships plodding along against a background of shifting fog. In a moment, the curtain fell again. No bird, no fish, no plane, no ship of foe or friend emerged from the Arctic solitude.

It was cold, and the air was piercing and bitter. The water in our cabins had been shut off and we had to shave and wash with ice-cold water brought by the stewards. On the boat-deck the soldiers and R.A.F. men of the machine-gun crews were given permission to come down from their turrets and tramp the decks. The ships's officers and men donned hooded duffel coats, or parkas, of camel's hair.

I paced the deck with 'Hub' Zemke, the American Army pilot. He had left his wife in America and gone to England to test American planes with the R.A.F. Now, at the age of twenty-seven, he was on a mission to Russia. He was of Swiss descent, and he combined the sturdy qualities of that mountain race with an American sense of humor.

'There's not much chance of bombers coming over today,' he said, as we stopped for a moment to watch 'Bartlett's Conscience' wallowing in the mist astern. 'With these low clouds, and the humidity and cold, there's too much danger of ice forming on the wings. I wouldn't like to be flying around in this kind of weather looking for a convoy — or anything else.'

In the evening the scene was unchanged. Gray, gray, gray — gray sea, gray ships, gray sky. A corporal of the R.A.F., a red-cheeked boy with bushy hair and thick glasses, came up from the lower deck to give a piano recital in the lounge. He had no notes and his memory was faulty, but his music cast a spell over this strange audience of soldiers and exiles on the northern sea. He played that short and simple Prelude of Chopin which is like a chorale, and the first movement of the Moonlight Sonata. The dim yellow light fell on the bowed heads and pensive faces of the men in Air Force blue and the soldiers in khaki. The same thought must have been in many minds. How many of these British boys will ever see England's shores again? Will you, Conybeare, ever putter about again among your rhododendrons? Will these stalwart Poles

live to roam the plains and forests of their native land? And will our Czech friends ever see again that ancient castle on the Hradcany hill?

## 2

The next night another spell was cast over the audience in the lounge. It was Sunday, August 24, and Winston Churchill was broadcasting from London. He told of his meeting with President Roosevelt off the American coast and of the talks which produced the Atlantic Charter. Then he described the church service on board the *Prince of Wales* in which the British and American leaders and their military and naval advisers took part. 'We sang the sailors' hymn "For Those in Peril,"' he said, 'and there are very many in peril on the sea.'

Yes, there were many in peril on the sea, and some of them in the far north smiled a little at the words of the British Prime Minister. Less than twenty-five years before, that remarkable man had sent British soldiers and sailors through the Arctic to destroy the Soviet régime. Now he was sending this convoy to help the Soviets in their battle for survival.

The fifteen months which had passed since the German invasion of the Low Countries had brought to light some of the failings of Winston Churchill as a war lord, but the solid benefits of his leadership could not be denied. He had carried the British nation through the dark hours of Dunkirk and the fall of France by giving expression to the courage in the hearts of the British people. His courage and his eloquence, too, had turned the tide of opinion in America and won for Britain an arsenal in the New World. And with true statesmanship and foresight, he had prepared for the day when Hitler would turn against the Soviet Union, and Britain would no longer stand alone.

Diplomatic intercourse between Britain and the Soviets was almost at a standstill when Churchill became Prime Minister in May, 1940. The Chamberlain government, it seemed, had as little understanding of the Soviet position in relation to the war as it had previously had of the Soviet rôle in the preservation of peace. Churchill, however, was clear-sighted enough to realize that Britain could not win without the Soviets, and he refused to be discouraged by the unhelpful attitude of the Kremlin.

Shortly after Churchill became Prime Minister, Sir Stafford Cripps, who was known as a friend of the Soviets, was appointed Ambassador to Moscow. In December, 1940, Lord Halifax was removed from the Foreign Office and sent to Washington. He had been deeply involved in the pre-war negotiations and as long as he remained at the Foreign Office there could be no improvement in Soviet-British relations. Anthony Eden, one of the pre-war champions of collective security and of cooperation with the Soviets, was made his successor.

It was at the end of February, or perhaps at the beginning of March, 1941, that Churchill made his first prediction of a German attack on Russia in the summer. During the following months, he repeated this forecast to diplomats, newspaper editors and publishers, and to other visitors. It had seemed like wishful thinking and few had dared to believe him. Why should Hitler open another front while he still had to cope with Britain?

The Prime Minister's predictions were supported, of course, by the intelligence reports which came in daily from all corners of Europe. The first strong tip, it seems, came from Yugoslavia. Hitler had conferred with the Yugoslav Premier and Foreign Minister on February 14 and he may have dropped a hint of his plans. But information from this source would

not have been conclusive. Prince Paul, the Senior Regent and the man who counted in Yugoslavia, had been educated at the court of the Czar and his entire political philosophy was dictated by fear and hatred of Russian communism. He was a charter member of that brilliant coterie of statesmen who welcomed Hitler as a 'bulwark against Bolshevism.' If Hitler wanted to influence Paul and keep Yugoslavia in line, an attack on the Soviet Union was the thing to promise.

Corroboration of the first report soon arrived from Rumania. Marshal Goering saw General Ion Antonescu, the Rumanian Premier, in Vienna on March 5 and may have told him of Hitler's plans. At all events, before the end of March, Antonescu had an idea of the German timetable which turned out to be accurate. Here again, however, there was room for suspicion. The Soviets had taken Bessarabia and northern Bukovina from Rumania the previous year; it would be natural to promise revenge to the Rumanians.

As the weeks went by information came in from other sources. At his little house in a London suburb, the former President of Czechoslovakia, Doctor Eduard Beneš, received the reports of his agents. Over the grapevine telegraph, the Polish government in London received other reports which helped to complete the picture. Troops were moving east — not garrison troops, but armored units and crack divisions of motorized infantry. Squadrons of the German Air Force which had fought in the battles of France and Britain were being transferred to airdromes in Poland. More German troops were sent to Finland. At Ankara, the German Ambassador, Franz von Papen, was talking too much, as usual.

By the middle of April, the British had gathered such impressive evidence that Churchill decided to send a personal message to Stalin. It was a warning of the impending German attack and an invitation to talk. The Soviets, however, were

being as short-sighted as they had once been far-seeing in their attitude toward Hitler. Stalin refused to see Cripps. So did Premier Molotov. The Ambassador was finally obliged to deliver his message to the Assistant Commissar for Foreign Affairs, A. Y. Vyshinsky, who was not at all pleased and who told Cripps that relations with Germany were being maintained satisfactorily on the basis of the Soviet-German pact.

This did not discourage Churchill. He persisted in his belief that Hitler would attack Russia and he prepared for the day when Britain and the Soviets would be fighting a common enemy.

Early in May Rudolph Hess landed by parachute on a Scottish farm. After Hitler struck at Russia, many people jumped to the conclusion that Hess had warned the British of the coming attack. This was a reasonable conjecture but it is open to considerable doubt. For one thing, Churchill's first warning was delivered to Moscow at least three weeks before Hess left Germany. For another, whatever lay behind Hess's flight, he did not leave Germany as a traitor to Hitler. In his conversations with British officials he declared that the Germany of Adolf Hitler was invincible and that if the war continued Britain would be destroyed, though Germany would suffer, too. In order to spare both nations further suffering, he had come on a peace mission, which he maintained was an entirely personal one. He believed, or professed to believe, that Churchill and a small group around him were the only people in England who wanted to go on with the war. Therefore he hoped that if he could establish contact with the right men he could induce them to get rid of Churchill and make peace with Germany. This was his story. Only time will tell whether Hess did indeed fly to Britain on his own responsibility or whether he was sent by Hitler. But in the meantime we can be sure that he gave the British very little useful information.



And as far as the German invasion of Russia is concerned, a British cabinet minister assured me early in July that Hess did not even mention Russia in the course of his questioning.

There was plenty of fresh information, however, from other sources. Once the German campaign in the Balkans and Crete was over, German troops and air squadrons moved north to the Soviet frontier. Goering's bomber groups delivered a last heavy attack on London on May 10 and then moved east. Early in June, Antonescu received his final instructions from Hitler and Ribbentrop at Berchtesgaden and returned to Bucharest ready to lead the Rumanian army against the Soviets.

Early on the morning of June 22, the same date that Napoleon addressed the Grande Armée in 1812, Hitler sent his legions against the Soviets. That night Winston Churchill made one of the great speeches of his career. He had been looking forward to this day for so long that he might have rolled off his sonorous phrases without a manuscript or notes. That speech, pledging loyal cooperation with the Soviet Union, stopped any appeasement movement in England and America before it could get under way. It forestalled a German whispering campaign that Britain would now make peace. And in the Soviet Union, it dispelled the deep-seated fear of a 'capitalist encirclement,' the fear that imperialist Britain might join the Nazis in a combined effort to destroy the Soviet Union.

Now, as the first token of Churchill's determination to co-operate, this convoy was sailing through the Arctic, somewhere to the northwest of Norway, on its way to Archangel.

### 3

The most dangerous stage of our voyage had arrived and we still had a week to go. The day after Churchill spoke the fog



still befriended us, but it was a freakish fog which played strange pranks with the rays of the invisible sun. The other ships of the convoy seemed to wind through blue labyrinths in the gray mist, sometimes clearly visible, at other times completely hidden. The sunlight, filtering through the fog layer, produced a colorless rainbow of pure luminosity which kept pace with us all the morning, now arching the munitions ship on our port beam, now gliding up to the side of the *Llanstephan Castle* so that it seemed that you might touch it from the deck.

The next day was cloudy, and that was all to the good. In the evening, however, the clouds lifted and visibility was perfect. The warship which was leading the convoy dropped back for a few minutes and signaled the merchantmen with her blinker lamp:

'Keep down your smoke. We are within an easy day's scouting range of the enemy.'

Darkness never came that night. At twelve o'clock the sky was still glowing, and a few hours later the sun was up again.

For forty-eight hours our luck held and we sailed without sighting an enemy. On Friday, August 28, however, there was an alarm. At six-thirty in the evening a plane roared through the clouds above the convoy. I was enjoying the soothing luxury of a hot salt-water bath at the time and did not see it, but some of the other passengers claimed to have sighted a German reconnaissance plane through a gap in the clouds. We were within easy bombing range of Norway and Finland.

That did not change the program for the evening — a party and vaudeville show given by the officers and men of the R.A.F. Wing. The two fighter squadrons had everything but chorus girls, and the Wing Commander was a good host. He was a stocky little New Zealander whose name was alleged to be Henry Neville Gynes Ramsbottom-Isherwood, but he

signed his orders 'G. R. Isherwood' and acted like that kind of fellow. He was a first-class pilot who had tested planes above forty thousand feet, and the type of officer who could afford to meet his subordinates on a footing of equality because he knew his job.

The show was a rousing success, and it had a strong Russian flavor. The six Volga boatmen, complete with beards of surgical gauze and cotton, chanted their way through the lounge, hauling a rope which finally produced the inevitable chamber-pot. A chorus of n.c.o.'s sang Russian and English songs, and a sergeant produced his Russian marionettes. Then the Poles took over the party and sang as only Slavs can sing. Toward midnight, we all sang the *Stolat*, tossing the Wing Commander and Bomba Lovell up to the ceiling and wishing them a hundred years of life.

Late the following afternoon we sighted the low gray hills of the Russian coast. There were patches of snow in their folds. We sailed straight south into the White Sea and arrived safely off Archangel on Sunday. Our voyage had taken almost three weeks. A tug carrying port officials, three women, and a pig mascot came out to meet us. The R.A.F. boys leaned over the rail and gave a hearty cheer for the women, who thereupon ducked into the cabin, but the pig raised its snout and grunted a welcome.

On Monday we crossed the bar and moved up the river, passing mile after mile of timber wharves, lumberyards, and sawmills. Not without reason, it seemed, was Russia once called 'Wooden Europe.' Everything was of wood. The wharves, rising six feet above the water, were built solidly of two-inch planks placed one above the other. The dwellings were mostly unpainted log cabins. Wooden towers for fire-watchers rose everywhere.

In the afternoon we docked at a big wharf paved with new

planking. A dozen heavily built workmen were constructing a ramp of logs and planks up to a large warehouse. They worked steadily and rhythmically, placing the heavy logs crosswise for a foundation and nailing the planks on top to make the inclined surface.

I stood at the rail watching them with Mrs. Haldane on my left and a British officer on my right. Mrs. Haldane was usually a very shrewd observer but now she was in ecstasies.

'Have you ever seen men work like that before?' she asked excitedly. 'See how fast they work. Have you noticed how carefully they sweep up the chips and shavings? You wouldn't find men working like that in a capitalist country.'

I thought the officer was going to explode.

'Look at them!' he cried. 'I've never seen such sloppy work. Just look at this place,' and he waved his arm toward the town. 'They've been at it twenty-five years and this is all they have to show. Look at the dock — look at that ramp!'

The men seemed to me to be working smoothly and doing a good job. I saw nothing to make me feel ecstatic and nothing to criticize. I tried to mediate.

'I've seen men working just like that in American lumber camps,' I said. 'And after all, this is only a timber port north of the Arctic Circle. You didn't expect to find a city like Liverpool or London, did you?'

'Just look at it,' replied the officer, waving his arm again. 'Twenty-five years, and this is all they can show!'

Later that day I called Bomba Lovell to the rail. Before he became interested in bombs, he had been a construction engineer. I had heard of people whose critical faculties suddenly stopped working when they entered the Soviet Union and I wanted to make sure that mine were all right.

'As an engineer what do you think of that ramp?' I asked.

'Good job,' he replied. 'That's a very easy way to build a foundation and it's quite solid.'

‘But what do you think of those men? They don’t seem to be burning up the wharf.’

‘They’re doing all right,’ he said. ‘Nothing exceptional, but if I had men working like that in England, I’d be satisfied. They’re all right.’

I felt reassured. But it was not the last time that I found three people looking at the same thing in Russia and each of the three seeing something different.



PART TWO

UNDER  
THE RED BANNER





# 6

## RUSSIANS AND RATIONS

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### 1

THE big Douglas transport with the red star on its khaki wings banked sharply as soon as it was off the ground, and in a moment we were over the forest. The pilot, an officer of the Red Air Force, had orders to stay low and we hedge-hopped all the way from Archangel to Moscow. For more than an hour we raced over a carpet of pines and silver birches. Then came an expanse of bleached waste land, and then the forest again.

After two hours of flying we sighted the first village, a cluster of unpainted log cabins dominated by an onion-topped church on a hill. Farther on, deep in the forest, we skimmed over another hamlet which must have been a lumbering community, and then, miles distant, over a third surrounded by farmland.

The old Russia, they say, was a country of three hundred thousand wooden villages like these, some in the forest, some on the steppe, and very few great cities. No wonder it was backward. Living in these small isolated communities, the peasant tilled his narrow strips of land with a wooden plow, threshed the grain with a wooden flail, ate with a wooden spoon from a wooden plate. Before the coming of the radio, the motor-car, and the Revolution, his knowledge of the great world must have been limited by what he could gather from the village priest, from itinerant officials, and now and then from a returning soldier as ignorant and illiterate as himself.

The plane flew into a fog and sped down low over a broad lake on which tugs were towing and pushing fleets of barges toward the north. At the far end we burst out of the mist into the afternoon sunshine. Below us lay the first great collective farm. In the center stood the village, an agglomeration of log cabins like the others, but the furrows speeding in unbroken lines across the fields were a token of the new era of iron and steel and tractors which was rapidly obliterating the wooden age from the minds of the Russian people. Further on were more of these communal farms, each laid out like a great wheel. At the hub, or center, was the village, from which little lanes radiated like spokes in all directions. Between the lanes the furrows ran in straight lines for a mile or more, starting at the hub and ending at the outer rim. It was hard to feel that in these villages served by the gasoline engine and electrical generator lived the children and grandchildren of serfs, people only one or two generations removed from the Middle Ages.

Ahead of us appeared the smoky vastness of Moscow. The pilot put the nose of the plane down, we swooped over a column of military trucks and tanks and landed at one of the air-dromes of the capital. John Russell, an official of the British Embassy and the son of Russell Pasha, welcomed me and

drove me into town. Henry Shapiro, the United Press correspondent in Moscow, met me at the British Embassy, across the river from the Kremlin, and took me to his comfortable apartment in the Arbat quarter.

The apartment was both home and office for Shapiro, and for me, too, during my stay in Moscow. Here I lived and worked with Shapiro's little army of retainers. The first of these was John Evans, his English secretary, a gaunt young man from the Midlands, who had come to Moscow to study music, married a Russian woman, and then settled down to become a skilled translator. He had translated Lenin's works into English for one of the State publishing houses. Because of his knowledge of the works of the Soviet leaders and because of his contacts with the Russian people, he was invaluable to me. Next came Oscar Emma, Shapiro's Russian secretary. He had visited America and worked for American correspondents in Moscow. He knew what American newspapermen wanted and how to get it. Then followed Nina, the buxom young housemaid; Jennie, the Finnish cook; and Sergei, the chauffeur. Later we added Alexei, who became my own driver.

I almost forgot to mention the handsome gray cat. Shapiro called him Adolf because he bit or scratched everyone who tried to be nice to him.

## 2

In those clear autumn days, there was an air of expectancy over Moscow. The war had been racing toward the capital with alarming strides. Although the Germans were still more than two hundred miles away, twice as far as they were from London, I could feel the grim compulsion of total war in Moscow as I had never felt it in England, not even in the days of the 'blitz.' The Soviets had adjusted themselves to a total

effort more quickly than any of the other countries which had faced Hitler.

One of the signs of this total effort was the part being played by women in the war. Women had always worked in Russia, and before the war they made up thirty-seven per cent of the thirty million workers and employees. But now even more of them were going into industry. The wives and sisters of mobilized men began to replace them in the factories. The trade unions took up the movement and popularized it. At the same time, in cooperation with the government and the factory managements, they hastened to expand the network of day nurseries so that children would receive adequate care while their mothers were turning out planes and guns.

In my early ramblings about Moscow I found women bricklayers in blue overalls repairing bomb damage to a theater, one of the few bombed buildings I saw in the capital. Women were working side by side with men on an excavation job in front of the Pushkin Museum. Each day I saw truckloads of women volunteers (they were volunteers then, but later were conscripted) roll out of Moscow to dig trenches, tank traps, and other fortifications behind the central front. One day I watched a company of *druzhnitsa* marching down Gorky Street armed with rifles and bayonets. They were girls in their twenties, wearing navy-blue berets and skirts, khaki tunics, and black knee boots. Although they knew how to handle their rifles, they were not used as fighters, but served with front-line divisions as doctors, nurses, and orderlies.

Women also had their place in the civil-defense organizations. Nina, Shapiro's maid, was a little frightened when war broke out and talked about going back to the farm from which she came. She changed her mind, however, when they made her an air-raid warden. She was a docile, good-natured servant, but when the sirens blew she became a conscientious

officer in the army of civil defense. One night when the anti-aircraft fire was exceptionally heavy, she ordered Shapiro to the shelter on pain of being reported to the police if he failed to go. He went.

The Soviets mobilized boys and old men as well as women to release man-power for the front and factories. Companies of Popular Guards, men too old or boys too young for active service, marched out of the city each day to dig fortifications. Boys at school were being taught to use rifles, machine guns, and hand grenades. Pamphlets which could be bought at any newspaper kiosk gave instructions for throwing grenades or benzine bottles at enemy tanks or trucks. The sporting papers had articles on the grim sports of rifle-shooting, grenade-throwing, and bayonet drill. The *Teacher's Gazette*, a weekly newspaper, laid down the educational program at the beginning of the school year: 'The most important duty of our schools this year is to teach their pupils to become strong soldiers and heroic defenders of our fatherland. All our work this year must be connected with the armed defense of our country.' Many a Soviet boy — many a girl, too — has been shot for hurling a benzine bottle at a German truck or trying to warn the Soviet troops of enemy movements.

The transition from non-belligerency to total war was, of course, more easily made by the Soviet people than by the peoples of the western countries. For twenty-five years, they had been going through wars of one kind or another — the First World War, the Civil War, the period of foreign intervention, the famine, the blockade by the capitalist powers, and then the long, relentless struggle on war lines to transform feudal Russia into a modern industrialized country. Blood, sweat, and tears were nothing new to these people. Neither was sacrifice.

The Soviet system, too, facilitated the transition to total war.

In England, after two years of war, the rights of individuals, corporations, and trade unions were still hampering the war effort. In the Soviet Union, where private property had been abolished, the government was not hindered by private rights. Here it could meet the totalitarian government of Germany on even terms, or better. It did not have to wrangle with the company which wanted to continue the profitable manufacture of hairpins rather than take a less profitable contract for airplane rivets. It did not have to plead with the motor industry to stop the manufacture of automobiles and start the production of tanks. It did not have to waste public funds on 'cost plus ten per cent' contracts which encouraged manufacturers to slow down production, keep labor idle, and increase costs in order to increase profits. And it did not have to plead with labor unions to waive the forty-hour week and extra pay for overtime. Whatever the faults of the Soviet system in time of peace, it was well suited to the grim exigencies of total war.

But no war is so grim that people forget to smile, and the Russians had smiled in worse times than these. I saw them smiling as they poured out of the Operetta Theater where the American musical comedy, *Rose Marie*, had been running for almost fifteen years. When the Russians like a thing, they keep on liking it, and they were just as fond of *Rose Marie* that September as they were in 1926 before they had heard of a man named Hitler. I saw them laughing, too, at the Moscow Art Theater, where one of the finest repertory companies in the world was playing, *The Pickwick Club*, an adaptation of Dickens's book, and Sheridan's *School for Scandal*.

On my first Sunday in Moscow Shapiro took me to the opening of the ballet season. Although the Soviets were making unprecedented sacrifices for the war, the government continued to subsidize the ballet, the opera, and the symphony orchestras. These were part of the cultural life of the nation

and could not be sacrificed. We saw the Bolshoi Theater company give an excellent performance of Tschaikovsky's *Swan Lake*. In the front rows of the orchestra seats were Sir Stafford Cripps, General Mason McFarlane, Admiral Miles, and other members of the British mission, and many other foreign diplomats and soldiers. But it was the children who made this performance notable for me. They filled the rest of the orchestra seats, the boxes, and the balconies, and they followed every step of the ballet as closely as an American boy follows a baseball game. When the final curtain fell, they swarmed down the aisles, frantically cheering the ballerina, Olga Lepeshinskaya, who had won the Stalin Prize the year before. One little girl in pigtails held a bouquet of three or four drooping carnations above her head to save it from the crush and, as Lepeshinskaya took a curtain call, she tossed the flowers into the footlights. The famous ballerina graciously picked them up and held them to her breast as if they were the rarest orchids.

You could see healthy, boisterous children like these everywhere in Moscow. Perhaps they impressed me so much because I had just come from a country whose children were showing the effects of two years of war. But I was also impressed because the contrast between the Russian children and their elders was so noticeable. Many of the older men and women on the streets of Moscow bore on their features the traces of war, famine, and unrelenting toil, and their clothes, though adequate and serviceable, were all of the same monotonous dark colors. The children, however, were an attractive and happy lot. They received the best of everything in the Soviet Union. It was not because the Bolsheviks were sentimental about children, but because they needed the nation's youth for the fulfillment of their plans. It was largely the younger generation which had carried the Soviets through the dangerous early years. And if the Soviet Union was to make

the eventual transition from the present stage of Soviet socialism to the era of communism, it would need the enthusiasm, the generous impulses of these children who had never known capitalist ways.

Although children and workers could forget the war for a few moments at the ballet or theater, nightfall always brought a grim reminder of the total struggle. The blackout settled down on Moscow, the strictest blackout in Europe. There was no street lighting of any kind. No gleam of light escaped the vigilant wardens who kept watch over the big apartment houses. The red star no longer shone over the crenelated battlements and watch towers of the Kremlin where Stalin was said to work through the night.

In the blackout, under the moon, the Kremlin looked more than ever like the citadel of an Asiatic prince. Perhaps it was this old palace-fortress, with its domes and golden cupolas, which set the seal of Asia upon Moscow. Still it did not fully explain the feeling of the visitor from the West that here, in the Soviet capital, he was on the marches of the East. Neither did the other symbols of Asia — the Mongoloid features of many Russians; the men in the *rubashka*, or Oriental shirt worn outside the trousers; the hotel waiter shuffling in a Tartar trot to take your order. It went deeper than that. Here in Moscow I began to realize for the first time how strong was the claim of Asia on the bodies and souls of the Soviet people. I began to appreciate the magnitude of the task they had undertaken when they set out to free themselves from that backwardness which we of the West are wont to call Asiatic.

### 3

The foreign correspondents lived well in Moscow, better than American correspondents in wartime London. The



British rationing regulations applied to British subjects and foreigners alike. The Soviets made special arrangements for foreign diplomats and correspondents at one of their best stores. American correspondents could also obtain American canned goods, cigarettes, whiskey, and beer from the commissary of the United States Embassy. And if they tired of eating at home, there were three or four good restaurants in which people who had the money could dine well — the meat and butter portions were larger than a week's ration in London.

I wanted to find out, however, how the average citizen was faring, so I obtained a list of rations for the Moscow district and put it alongside a list of British rations. Here it is:

WEEKLY RATIONS (in pounds)			
<i>London</i>		<i>Moscow</i>	
		Worker	Dependent
Bread	Unrationed and freely obtainable at subsidized low price	9.24	6.16
Sugar	.50	.66	.55
Butter	.13	.22	.11
Margarine	.25	Unrationed	
Fish	Unrationed but sometimes difficult to obtain	.44	.28
Cereals	Unrationed	.83	.55
Meat	One shilling's worth, averaging something less than 1 pound	.66	.33
Cheese	.19	Unrationed	

Both the British and Soviet citizen could eat in a restaurant without producing ration coupons. In both nations, too, there were factory canteens in which working men and women could obtain a noonday meal which did not count against their rations. In Britain, most of these canteens had sprung up since the war. In the Soviet Union, they had existed in many factories for a number of years. The Soviets also had a widespread network of canteens for school children. The net result in both countries was that a large part of the working population needed its rations only for breakfast and supper.

There was one respect, however, in which the Soviet rationing system differed radically from the British. The Soviet rations were not the maximum quantity which could be bought. They were merely the maximum the citizen could buy at a cheap price. If he wanted more butter, sugar, or meat, he could go to the so-called commercial stores and buy all he could afford at prices two or three times the rationed price.

With Oscar Emma as my guide, I visited some of the commercial shops of Gorky Street, one of the broad new thoroughfares running out of the Red Square. The variety of food on display was amazing. The clean glass showcases in the first big shop we visited would have done credit to an American provision store. They were filled with roasted chickens, hams, sausages, rabbits, smoked meats, smoked sturgeon, salmon, and other fish. There were mountains of butter and cheese. Behind the counters, against the walls, were stacks of canned goods — caviar, sea crab, lobster, vegetables, and fruits.

In a big bakery across the street I saw more varieties of bread and rolls than I had ever seen anywhere else — a dozen kinds of wheat bread, several kinds of rye bread, fancy bread covered with poppy seed and caraway seed, bread in various twisted shapes, sugar-coated rolls and buns, and several varieties of pretzels. There were also a dozen kinds of cakes and as many kinds of cookies. Everything looked appetizing and clean. What surprised me most, however, was to see women, apparently workingmen's wives, buying bread and cakes at prices which would have been considered exorbitant in America. A woman in a rather shabby black coat bought a large piece of jelly roll which was being sold for twenty-four rubles a kilo. Soviet prices are hard to translate into American terms for a number of reasons, one of them being the uncertain value of the ruble. If we take the official rate of the ruble, 5.30 to a dollar, that jelly roll would have cost \$2.60 a pound. If

we take the rate allowed to diplomats, twelve rubles to a dollar, it would have cost ninety cents a pound. Another woman bought a loaf of rye bread for sixty cents, at the official rate of exchange, or twenty-five cents at the 'diplomatic rate.'

The average worker could not afford to patronize these shops. He had to be content with the rationed quantities and the cheaper unrationed foods like cabbages and potatoes which had always been the staples of the Russian diet. The women I saw in the commercial stores were the wives of factory foremen and engineers and Stakhanovite workers who rationalized their work and increased their output. Others who could afford to patronize these shops were authors, playwrights, musicians, actors, orchestra leaders, and ballet dancers. These people made up the highest income group in the Soviet Union.

To an outsider this system seemed less fair than the British. It was strange that Soviet Russia should grant special advantages to people who had more money than their neighbors. A Soviet friend, to whom I mentioned the matter, emphasized that these advantages were gained by hard work and merit, and did not come as a result of birth or special privilege. In the socialist stage through which the Soviet Union was passing, men were paid according to their work. A good worker earned more than a poor worker. My friend pointed out that it would be useless to reward the good worker with money if he could do nothing with it. The extra quantities of butter and sugar and cereals were therefore a reward and incentive to the man who turned out more bullets or bayonets than his fellow workers and to the people who helped sustain morale.

I returned to the commercial stores several times. Each time the display of food was smaller than the time before. As the Germans advanced over the fertile regions of the Ukraine, the Soviet government took steps to conserve food supplies and reduced the quantities allotted to this free market.

# 7

## EXILES IN UTOPIA

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### 1

THE air-raid siren rose and fell. It was not so strident as the 'banshee wail' in London but just as inescapable, because it came into the apartment over the loudspeaker which we always kept switched on in the room which served as an office.

I had been in Moscow a week without seeing a raid. I wondered whether I should stay at home and see the barrage — it was said to be heavier than the London barrage — or go to a public shelter and see how it compared with those in England and Spain. The stern look of an air-raid warden began to creep over Nina's pleasant round features and I felt that I should soon be ordered to the shelter. Just then Henry Shapiro telephoned from the press room of the Foreign Office, where he was waiting for the night communiqué, and made up my mind for me.

'Here's your chance to see the shelter system,' he said. 'Just walk over to the Metro station at the Palace of the Soviets.'

I put on my trench coat, took a bundle of newspapers, and set out with Jennie, the Finnish cook. The autumn sky was thick with stars but there were no street lights and we had to walk cautiously over the cobblestones. All along our street, dark figures were coming out of the apartment houses.

Jennie was a timid little woman who had come to the Soviet Union from the United States with a party of Finns. They were one of those bands of working men and women who had decided in the early thirties that they must do their share in building the workers' state. Jennie was probably taken along because she could cook.

She chattered as we walked along, sometimes to herself, sometimes to me.

'Is it like this in London?' she asked.

'Something like this,' I replied. 'But some families go to the underground as soon as it's dark and stay there all night, even if there isn't a raid.'

'They couldn't do that here,' she said. 'Only women with children may go to the Metro before the raid. Men must wait until the alarm.'

There was still no sound of planes or guns.

'Do they have house committees in London, too?' she asked.

'Yes,' I said. 'My wife and I were on a fire squad at our apartment house.'

'Did you ever have to do anything?'

'Yes, we put out a lot of incendiary bombs. That's easy — you just throw shovels full of sand on them.'

We reached the boulevard a hundred yards from the subway station. Whole families were quietly taking their places in the two lines which moved slowly toward the entrance. We joined one line and advanced a few feet at a time. Ahead of us

the naked girders of the Palace of the Soviets reached upward toward the Great Dipper. The Palace was designed to be the tallest building in the world, taller than the Empire State Building, but it was a doubtful enterprise and the girders were later taken down to be used for war purposes. Over to the right, anti-aircraft shells began to burst, darting across the western sky like big fireflies. The rumble of the guns rolled in from the distance. The red bursts moved nearer and the noise of the guns became louder. Soon the shells were exploding overhead and the guns were roaring all around us. Moscow was putting up a wall of fire to turn back the attackers. But by that time we had reached the entrance to the Metro. The crowd moved rapidly along a wide corridor and down a flight of steps to the station platform. It was a sleepy crowd of collarless men, women in shawls and kerchiefs, and children wrapped in overcoats or blankets.

The Metro was the pride of Moscow, and this station was one of the best. Its walls and pillars were of marble and it was lighted by well-proportioned bronze lamps. The air-raid arrangements had been thoughtfully worked out. Trains stopped running at eight o'clock. An hour was taken to clean the stations. Then trains were run up to the platforms, the current was cut off, and at nine o'clock mothers and their children were admitted.

In the four cars which had been left at the platform, babies were already asleep on the leather seats with their mothers beside them. Women attendants in white gowns turned away women who had no children. There was more accommodation for mothers and babies farther along the platform where white cribs and camp cots had been placed. On one cot, a young mother nursed her child as the crowd filed past. Doctors and nurses in clean white gowns came out of a dispensary at the far end and moved about the platform.

Blue-coated militiamen kept us moving until we reached the end of the station. Then we walked down a wooden incline to the tracks and along the tracks into the tunnel. The earlier arrivals were already sitting down or lying on the roadbed next to the left wall or between the two rails. Between the third rail and the right wall was a passageway down which we filed. Militiamen walked back and forth on the third rail, keeping late-comers moving into the tunnel.

Jennie and I walked two or three hundred yards before we found an unoccupied place between the rails. We spread our papers on the roadbed and sat down. The roar of the guns was reverberating through the tunnel but we could not hear the planes.

The efficiency of the system was impressive. The arrangements were not quite so good as those I had seen in Barcelona during the Spanish Civil War, but they were as good as those London had devised after two years of the present war. Moscow, like London, was cursed with a sandy soil which made it difficult, if not impossible, to dig deep shelters like those in Republican Spain. The Metro was too shallow to provide security against a direct hit — a heavy bomb crashing into a tunnel might kill a thousand people — but it did give protection against blast, splinters, and flying débris.

Late-comers kept walking past us in search of space farther down the tunnel. A militiaman moved back and forth on the third rail.

‘Go to sleep, Comrades,’ he said. ‘Go to sleep — you have work to do tomorrow, Comrades.’

Jennie lay down on the ties to my left with her head on the rail. I followed the example of the man on my right and sat on the rail, folding my arms and resting them on my knees. My neighbor was a middle-aged Russian, collarless, fair-haired, with a glint of red in the stubble of his beard.

A pretty girl in a navy-blue beret and trench coat walked down the passageway in the direction of the entrance. Behind her came two boys. In a few minutes she was back, holding the arm of one of them while the other walked dejectedly behind. I thought of the London newspaper which had started a column called 'Shelter Romances' and of the nights in Barcelona when young couples met during the raids on the Metro platforms beneath the Ramblas.

It was uncomfortable sitting on the rail and I shifted my position. My Russian neighbor shifted, too. I looked at him and a droll smile lighted his rugged face.

'Air raids are hard on the behind,' he observed. Then he gave up and lay down with his head on the rail.

The reverberations of the guns grew louder. I tried sitting down on a tie with my back to the rail and my elbows on it. That grew tiresome and I sat on the rail again.

'Go to sleep, Comrades,' said the militiaman, coming toward us along the third rail. He looked at me and added, 'You, too, Comrade.'

I lay down on my left side with the rail as a pillow. Jennie seemed to be sleeping soundly. I shifted to my right side. My Russian neighbor reached down into his trousers, lifted his shirt and scratched himself, then sighed with obvious satisfaction. I fell asleep.

## 2

I awoke after two hours or so, stretched my cramped limbs, and sat up on the rail.

'What time is it?' a woman's voice asked.

I glanced at my wrist watch before it occurred to me that someone had spoken English. I looked up and saw that it was the woman next to Jennie, a thin woman with deep lines under her eyes and a gray shawl over her head.



'What time is it?' she asked again in English.

'Three-thirty,' I replied, still too sleepy to be surprised.

'You are an American?' she said after a pause.

'Yes,' I answered. 'And you?'

'I have been to America; I am a Finn.'

I pointed to Jennie, who was still asleep.

'She is a Finn. She came from America, too.'

The woman nodded.

'Where did you come from in America?' I asked.

'Minnesota,' she replied. 'There were lots of us Finns. We came over in 1934.' She paused for a moment, then added with a curl of the lip, 'To the "Workers' Paradise."''

I waited for her to go on, if she chose.

'Yes, there were lots of us,' she continued, 'but I am alone here now. They don't trust us Finns. They send us to Siberia. That's where they'll send me, too.'

'Are you a Soviet citizen?' I asked.

'Yes. I was a fool. I gave up my American passport.'

That was a story I had already heard from others in Moscow. The Russian Revolution had attracted thousands of enthusiastic workers and intellectuals from countries overseas. Some of these pilgrims retained their foreign passports and soon returned, embittered and disillusioned, to the countries from which they came. Others, who in their first enthusiasm had adopted Soviet nationality, were obliged to stay.

Most of these people had come from highly developed countries like the United States to a land admittedly backward. Although the Soviet Union was not the country they had expected to find, they had settled down to help transform it into the paradise of their dreams. It was not easy. They lived in crowded tenements, sharing the inadequate plumbing and the cookstove with half a dozen families. The food was meagre. There were few of the comforts they had once known. The

faint-hearted soon dropped out, and others followed. The strong stayed on, but even many of them gave up when their friends disappeared in the purge and famous men whom they once had revered passed into exile or oblivion.

Sitting there in the tunnel, I wondered about these pilgrims to the Promised Land. Who was it who said that the Bolsheviks took over a country which was four centuries behind the western world? That was not absolutely true, of course. In its industrial development, for instance, Czarist Russia was not so far behind western Europe. But its system of land tenure and farming was certainly medieval and so was the autocratic structure of its government. In the sixteenth century, England had certainly had more experience of free institutions than the Russia of Nicholas II.

Suppose, I mused, that four or five centuries ago, when the other nations were laying the foundations of the modern state, England had been forced to devote all her energies to repelling the hordes from the East. And suppose that geography had been so unkind to her that she missed the great currents of ideas which had shaped our western civilization. If that had been the lot of England, her development, I imagine, would have been retarded like that of Russia. She would have entered the twentieth century laboring under some of the ways of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. . . . What kind of England was the England of four centuries ago? That must have been the time of Henry VIII. And of Sir Thomas More. Henry's England could not have been a pleasant or a happy land. The rich had ground down the poor to a state of beggary. Half the people, or more than half, could not have been able to read or write. They lived in dark, miserable hovels, in towns with narrow, winding streets reeking with the filth of ages. The gallows stood at the crossroads.

Gentle Sir Thomas had dreamed of another England, a

Utopia, in which the wealth was held in common, and all, not only the poor, were compelled to work. The streets were broad, the houses were of several stories and had glass windows. Everyone went to school. Criminals were reformed by useful labor.

Now, what if England had been retarded like Russia, I asked myself, and had entered the twentieth century a semi-medieval autocracy? And then, suppose that a revolution occurred, and the revolutionaries tried to put into practice the most generous principles of More's *Utopia*. And men and women from across the sea who believed in the vision of Sir Thomas hastened to England, eager to help in the creation of a new civilization. What would they have done when they came up against the realities of Henry's England, of medieval England? Wouldn't they have been revolted by the squalor and misery which persisted in spite of high principles? Wouldn't they have been shocked by the cruelty of a people who had never known kindness and who could not change their ways in a day, or a year, or even twenty years? How long, I wonder, would these Utopians have stayed in the real England? . . .

People were getting up and stretching in the tunnel. I had missed the all-clear signal. The Finnish woman, Jennie and I arose, too. We filed down the tunnel. Everyone had picked up his newspapers and cushions, and the tunnel and platform were as admirably clean as when we entered. On the platform, doctors and nurses were still watching over the sleeping children and mothers.

The Finnish woman disappeared in the throng.

3

The next day the Soviet government struck with characteristic ruthlessness at the German fifth column. By a decree of

the Supreme Soviet, the entire population of the autonomous German Republic of the Volga was ordered transferred to Siberia.

The Volga Germans were one of the one hundred and eighty-nine nationalities which inhabit the Soviet Union. Under the czars, most of these nationalities had been repressed. The czarist governments followed a policy of forcible Russification, trampling down the languages, traditions, and cultures of the non-Russian peoples. One of the first acts of the Bolsheviks was to grant complete equality to all the races, and this was one of the reasons for their success. Under Stalin's leadership, the minor nationalities were not only allowed to develop in their own way but encouraged to preserve their languages and traditions. This liberal nationality policy, though little known abroad, was one of Stalin's greatest achievements.

The Volga Germans were one of the few non-Russian races which were not repressed by the czars. Catherine the Great, a German herself, had imported twenty-seven thousand German colonists in 1760 and 1761. She gave them holdings of seventy to one hundred and fifty acres in the south Volga area, hoping they would set an example of order and industry to her other peasants. They did set the example, but the backward Russians did not heed it. In a few years, the Germans had outstripped the local peasants, and they remained more prosperous than the Russians down to the Revolution.

As small-holders, the Volga Germans were not at first opposed to the Bolsheviks, but later they violently resisted the communalization of the land. Their reluctance to sow was partly responsible for the Volga famine of 1922. They also resisted collectivization of farming under the first five-year plan and were held partly accountable for the Volga famine of 1931-32. Once collectivization became a fact, however, their superior skill and industry again made them a model for the

Russians about them. They went on speaking their peculiar German dialect, and even after the coming of Hitler were allowed to receive German Evangelical missionaries.

Now, however, the Soviet government alleged that tens of thousands among them were ready to rise up at a signal from Germany and spread disorder and confusion in the rear of the Red Army. At the time, Marshal Budyonny's forces were being rapidly pushed back in the Ukraine and it was imperative that their rear should be secure. There had been some fifth-column activity in the western Ukraine and some in the Baltic States, though no Quislings had arisen among the Soviet peoples. The Soviet government therefore ordered the Volga Germans, six hundred thousand of them, to be resettled in the Novosibirsk and Omsk districts of central Siberia and the Altai region of Kazakstan on the Mongolian frontier. We did not know at the time that if the Soviet government was forced to leave Moscow it planned to move to Kuibyshev, only about two hundred miles north of the Volga German Republic.

At the same time that the German Republic was liquidated, the Volga Germans were weeded out of Moscow. Many diplomats and journalists had employed Volga Germans as servants. They were clean, industrious, and efficient. Now the police ordered them to take provisions for two weeks and go immediately by train to Siberia. Soviet citizens of Finnish descent were also weeded out.

We were worried for a time that we might lose Jennie and Sergei, the chauffeur. Sergei had worked for the German Ambassador and that might have counted against him. But he was not molested and neither was Jennie.

# 8

## RED PROPAGANDA

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### 1

THE foreign correspondents in Moscow were an unhappy lot. The greatest war in history was going on two hundred miles away and they had to stay in the capital.

I brought up the question of going to the front the first time I met Nicolai Palgunov, the head of the press and censorship bureau of the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, but he gave me no encouragement. He was a tall, myopic Russian with a shock of black hair like a golliwogg, a typical communist intellectual. He had been the Paris correspondent of *Tass*, the official Soviet news agency, for a number of years and he spoke fluent French.

'The Soviet censorship, M. Carroll, is the most liberal in the world,' he said at the outset of our first conversation.

I could not help smiling. Censors are inclined to be impressed by their own liberality.

'It doesn't look very liberal from the outside,' I replied, 'but I am willing to be shown.'

I soon found that it was much less liberal than the British censorship in London. Strange as it may seem to Americans, however, it was liberal indeed compared with the cable censorship which the United States established for a time after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Months later I discovered that British correspondents in New York who wanted to send news messages to London and American correspondents in Hawaii who wanted to cable the mainland had to submit their dispatches to a blind censorship. This is the most vicious of all censorships. Under a blind censorship, a correspondent never sees his messages after they go to the censor. They may be killed, badly mutilated or cut in such a way that the sense is distorted, and the correspondent can do nothing about it. This arrangement was particularly hard on the correspondents of friendly countries in New York and Washington. Fortunately, it did not affect much of the news published in the American press.

The Moscow censorship was an open censorship. You knew exactly what the censors did to your story — often to your sorrow. When it came back to you from the censor's office, you could send it on to the telegraph office for transmission to America or go back and argue with the censors about the cuts or changes they had made. If they would not yield to your objections, you could kill the story yourself. On some points, notably military secrets (and almost everything was a military secret), the Soviet censors would not budge. On others they were reasonable. Sometimes by changing a word or two which they had not fully understood you could persuade them to restore sentences or paragraphs which had been cut. On the whole, however, it was the strictest censorship I had ever worked under.

My first story, a piece about the atmosphere of Moscow, went through the censorship with only a few words deleted. My second story, rounding up a few innocuous facts about the R.A.F. Wing which had arrived in Russia, was killed. I killed my third story myself because I thought the censor's cuts were unjustified. After that my average improved.

One of the most irritating features of the Soviet censorship was its slowness. Like most Soviet officials, the censors were overworked. There were only four of them and the censorship bureau was open twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week. Copy piled up and stories were sometimes not released for eight, ten or even twenty-four hours.

The chief censor was a friendly Don Cossack named Anurov. One of his assistants was a Ukrainian named Kozhemiakov, a handsome, fair-haired youth, very intelligent and very quick. Another was a middle-aged man whose name I never mastered; we called him 'the Chinese professor' because he had taught Chinese at a university. The fourth member of the quartet was a mousy little man for whom we did not even have a nickname.

The press and censorship bureau occupied half a dozen rooms on the fifth floor of an apartment building which had been converted to the uses of the Foreign Office. In two of these rooms the correspondents worked. Henry Shapiro used to write his stories on the day's developments at one end of his desk while I wrote my feature stories at the other. He impressed me as being one of the best-equipped foreign correspondents I had ever met. After graduating from Harvard Law School, he came to Moscow and qualified to practice law in the Soviet Union. Only two or three foreigners had done that. He spoke Russian well and knew the history of Russia inside out. And unlike most foreigners in Moscow, he had remained objective and level-headed in his attitude toward the Soviet régime.



Twice a day, at noon and at midnight, we sent the official communiqué on the military situation. We supplemented it with stories from the Soviet press and such meagre information as we could glean from Russian sources and foreign diplomats. The summary of the military situation contained in the communiqué was trustworthy. It did not tell everything, and it was slow in admitting losses, but what it said about the general position was accurate. Of the newspapers, the best was the *Red Star*, the journal of the Red Army. But like other Soviet papers it usually omitted dates and names of places, and it was therefore difficult to fit the stirring actions it described into a coherent story of the war.

## 2

Twice a week the correspondents were given information which had not appeared in the newspapers. On Tuesday and Friday afternoons, Solomon Abromovitch Lozovsky, Vice-Commissar for Foreign Affairs and Vice-Chairman of the Soviet Information Bureau, held a press conference. The correspondents sat on two sides of a red-covered table in the former Greek Legation and Lozovsky took his place at the head. With his gray beard and great shock of dark hair in which streaks of gray were only beginning to appear, he looked like a prophet out of the Old Testament. His forehead was high and massive, his nose straight and well-chiseled. His eyes were clear and twinkled with sardonic humor. Although no fop, he had the reputation of being one of the best-dressed men in the Soviet hierarchy.

He usually began his conference with a monologue about German atrocities or the exaggerated claims of his rival, Doctor Joseph Goebbels. Then he invited questions. These brought out whatever news there was. One of the best stories

obtained in this way was the destruction by the Soviets of the great Dnieper dam when the Germans swept over the western Ukraine in August. The correspondents were allowed to send this story abroad, though it was never published in the Soviet press.

Lozovsky's career had been turbulent even for a Bolshevik. He was born in 1878 in the Ukraine, the son of a poor Jewish school teacher named Dridzo. It was said that he started his career at the age of eight selling lemons and matches. After one of his conferences, a correspondent who had not been able to get the information he wanted remarked, 'Now he sells only lemons.' In 1901, at the age of twenty-three, Lozovsky joined the Social-Democratic Party and adhered to the Bolshevik wing. One of his first underground jobs for the party was organizing study circles among railwaymen at Lozovaia in the Ukraine, and he later took the name of that town as his own. Twice he was arrested and exiled. The second time, while being taken to Siberia, he escaped and fled to Paris. There he became secretary of the hatters' union and bakers' cooperative. He returned to Russia at the outbreak of the Revolution in 1917, was expelled from the Communist Party and reinstated. Then he became President of the Profintern, the Communist Trade Union International, established in opposition to the Amsterdam, or Socialist, International, and devoted most of his energies to trade-union questions.

Lozovsky was one of the few men remaining in important positions who had spent any length of time abroad. I think he appreciated the advantages to Russia of putting the Soviet case before the world by allowing the foreign press to write more freely. But many of the other Soviet leaders apparently did not. One of Stalin's biographers, the French communist, Henri Barbusse, relates how Stalin himself made a collection of unfriendly criticisms of the first five-year plan in the Ameri-

can, British, Italian, and Polish newspapers. The Soviet leaders never forgot for a moment that the 'capitalist press' had always been hostile to them, and most of them could not see that it was to their advantage to let foreign correspondents go to the front and write about the heroic struggle of the Red Army.

This unwillingness to make intelligent use of the 'capitalist press' was only one of a number of weaknesses in the Soviet propaganda organization. After all the commotion which has been made about Russian propaganda, I was surprised to find that the Soviets were overlooking many ways of influencing world opinion, not only through the press, but through the movies, the radio, and other media. They seldom missed a trick in the propaganda directed at their own people, but the machinery they employed to put their case before the world would have been considered inadequate by any other great power.

At that time, the British Ministry of Information had over a thousand officials and employees, and there were at least a dozen other British agencies in the field of foreign propaganda. The German Ministry of Propaganda must have employed thousands of writers, journalists, authorities on foreign affairs, and military, naval, and air experts. In the Soviet press and censorship bureau, Palgunov had one assistant, four censors, and a few stenographers. Then there was the Soviet Information Bureau, which had sprung up in June, 1941. Its chairman, Alexander Shcherbakov, was a man we never saw; as a member of the Politbureau of the Communist Party, he probably had other tasks which he considered more important. Lozovsky, the Vice-Chairman, apparently did most of the work, but it was only a part-time job for him. As Vice-Commissar for Foreign Affairs, he handled relations with the United States and other matters, and I believe he still paid

some attention to union activities. The Bureau had on its staff one military expert, Colonel Baltin, and twenty or thirty Soviet writers. They included Ilya Ehrenbourg, who had worked as a correspondent in France and Republican Spain; Eugene Petrov, journalist and co-author of the satire, *Little Golden Calf*; Valentine Katayev, novelist and war correspondent; and Alexander Afinogenov, a popular dramatist, whose wife was a native of Hollywood. These men, too, were working for the Bureau only part of the time.

This was the entire visible organization. There was undoubtedly more behind it, but the entire propaganda apparatus brought to bear on the foreign press was only a little toy engine beside the great steam turbines of Britain and Germany.

Then, of course, there was the Comintern, or Third International. It was hard to tell just what it was up to at the moment. Some people in Moscow believed that it was responsible for some of the clever radio broadcasts which were being made to Germany. An ambassador who had looked into the matter told me that this was wrong. These broadcasts, he said, were being directed from the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. The Comintern was undoubtedly trying to stir up trouble in the countries occupied by Germany, but, in his opinion, it had practically closed shop in America and the British Empire for the duration of the war.

We saw little of the foreign communists in Moscow. They did not mingle with the representatives of the 'capitalist press.' Twice a week a few of them appeared at Lozovsky's conferences. One of them was Janet Weaver, a pleasant American girl with the air of a school teacher. She was the correspondent of the New York *Daily Worker*. Another was a tall, well-spoken Negro who represented an American Negro newspaper. A third was Jesus Hernandez, the former Minister of Education

of the Spanish Republic and the chief political commissar of the Republican Army. He was one of a group of Spanish communists who took refuge in the Soviet Union when the Republic collapsed. Among the others were Dolores Ibarruri ('La Pasionaria') and Colonel Juan Modesto, commander of the Republican Army in the counterattack across the Ebro River in the summer of 1938.

## 3

Reports came back from the central front that the invincible German army had at last suffered a defeat. Hitler's legions were still advancing in the Ukraine and pushing perilously close to Leningrad, but east of Smolensk Marshal Timoshenko had seized the initiative and hurled them back in the first Soviet offensive action of the war. The battle had started in August and continued for twenty-six days. The Russians had recaptured the town of Yelnya, fifty miles southeast of Smolensk, and several hundred square miles of the surrounding territory. Farther south, where the central and southern fronts merged, they had smashed a German offensive at Bryansk and hurled the Germans back.

The United States and British Ambassadors, Laurence Steinhardt and Sir Stafford Cripps, urged the Russians to let American and British correspondents go to the front. The Soviets wanted American and British war materials, and there was to be a conference of the three powers in Moscow to discuss the supply question. Stories about the Soviet victory would help to convince the British and American peoples that the Red Army was going to hold the Germans. The Soviet authorities began to grow more cooperative toward the press. First, they let us make an educational excursion to an artillery training school. Then Lozovsky gave a banquet for the foreign

correspondents — one of those formidable Russian banquets which go on for hours with enormous quantities of caviar, fish and meat, and vodka and every kind of wine. Two days later, on Sunday, September 14, Palgunov called a few of us to his office and told us that we would leave for the front the next morning.

That night, at the home of a friend, I met a young Russian woman whose husband was at the front. She was dark-eyed and attractive and full of spirit. In disregard of precedent, I shall refrain from calling her Sonya. Let her be nameless. Although Russians in Moscow had shunned foreigners since the purge, she seemed at ease in foreign company. I think she had once worked for a foreign embassy or legation.

'So you're going to the front,' she said. 'I wish I could go. I would go as a nurse, a truck-driver, or anything, if they would only let me.'

'Here in Moscow,' she went on, 'there are so many rumors. It isn't healthy. Why doesn't Stalin talk to us? If he would only tell us what is happening! We Russians are not afraid of the truth. Our people will fight all the harder if there is bad news. Why doesn't Stalin tell us what is happening?'

'Didn't Stalin make a speech a little while ago?' I asked.

'That was weeks ago — in July,' she replied.

'There was something about that speech which I didn't understand,' I said. 'I believe he spoke at six o'clock in the morning and there was no previous announcement that he would speak. Why was that?'

She shrugged her shoulders.

'One story I heard,' I persisted, 'was that Stalin speaks Russian with a Georgian accent and he is rather self-conscious about it. That sounds rather silly to me, but the speech was repeated later by announcers. Why didn't they broadcast a recording?'

She laughed contemptuously.

'Stalin is not the kind of man to worry about his accent,' she said. 'And besides, he knows that everybody is behind him now and they don't care whether he is a Georgian, a Ukrainian, an Uzbek, or a Jew.'

She lit a cigarette and remained thoughtful for a moment. Then she said quietly:

'You are going to the front. You will see the soldiers and the peasants. Forget all the silly things you have heard from the people in the foreign embassies and you will learn much about the Russians.'

'Russians,' she continued, 'are not like the Germans. They are not easily fooled by propaganda. They think for themselves, and don't let anyone tell you that they don't. You will soon find that out if you keep your eyes and ears open. Take a good look at the face of a Russian peasant. He is shrewd, he is no fool. He knows pretty well what is going on.'

'Do the people know that the Dnieper dam was destroyed?' I asked.

'Of course they know,' she replied. 'They know everything.' She laughed and added, 'You can't hide much from the Russian people.'

Suddenly she grew tense.

'I am glad that the dam was blown up,' she exclaimed. 'If I had built that dam with my own hands, if I had worked all my life to build it, I would have blown it up rather than let it fall into the hands of the German fascists.'

Then she laughed a little at her own earnestness.

'How did the people learn about the dam?' I asked.

'Haven't you heard of the O.G.G.?' she replied.

'No, what is it?'

'The O.G.G. is the underground information service. The letters stand for a Russian expression meaning "a certain citi-

zeness says.” You see, when the women are waiting in line at the bakery in the morning, one woman says to another, “A certain citizeness says that things are bad in the Ukraine.” “Yes,” says the other woman, “I know a woman whose brother has just come from Kiev and he says that everybody in Kiev is saying that the dam on the Dnieper has been destroyed by our troops.”

‘The O.G.G. knows everything that is going on. The trouble is that it also knows lots of things that are not going on.’ She paused and then added, ‘That’s why I wish Stalin would speak to us.’



# 9

## TIMOSHENKO'S MEN

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### 1

THE road to the front ran straight to the far horizon. All through the morning the little convoy of six M-1 cars, the Russian version of the 1936 Ford, rolled across the flat plains and through the forests of pine and birch.

Times had changed since Richard Harding Davis went off to the wars. Our party included two women — Margaret Bourke-White, the American photographer, who represented *Life*, and Mrs. Haldane. The rest of us had almost rebelled when we learned that this was to be a coeducational trip, but we decided that the story was too good to miss. No foreigners, not even military attachés, had been allowed to see the Red Army at the front, and we were going to the battlefields where the German Army had suffered its first defeat in this war.

The party struck a new note in fashions for war correspond-

ents. Miss Bourke-White wore a flowing coat of bright scarlet. If a German flyer sighted her, he would probably report that he had seen a marshal of the Red Army. Cyrus Sulzberger, the mercurial young correspondent of the *New York Times*, wore a white ski jacket and blue ski trousers under a fur-lined overcoat which flapped around his ankles. Someone alleged that he had bought it from a pawnbroker in Bessarabia. Almost as picturesque a figure was Alexander Werth, the Russian-born correspondent of Reuters, the British news agency. He appeared in a knee-length coat of white fur which he said was Siberian dogskin. A committee of veterinarians headed by Vernon Bartlett decided that it was indeed the skin of a Siberian dog, a rare breed used by the secret police, or Ogpu, and therefore known as an 'Ogpoodle.' The most picturesque figure of all, however, was undoubtedly A. T. Cholerton of the London *Daily Telegraph*, who simply appeared as usual with the bushy black beard which gave him the air of a sinister revolutionary. I had nothing to contribute but a louse-belt, and I kept that in reserve.

The Moscow-Smolensk highway, along which some of the greatest battles of the war were to be fought, was wide enough for two-lane traffic in both directions. It was one of the main supply routes for the army on the central front, and in spite of heavy use, it was kept in excellent condition by gangs of men and women who were working all along the way. Drab military trucks loaded with cases of ammunition and food were rolling west at a steady twenty miles an hour. Now and then we passed trucks with a big metal tank on the running-board next to the driver. These were some of the non-gasoline burning vehicles which the Soviets had developed to run on wood cubes, charcoal, peat, and compressed straw.

As we rolled along under a frowning sky, we sighted a few houses and a church steeple across the plain. This was Boro-

dino, where the army of Marshal Kutuzov fought Napoleon in the most terrible battle of the war of 1812. On either side of the road anti-tank ditches ran across the flat fields, and far off to the right, men and women in an endless line were digging a new ditch, working steadily with long-handled shovels. This region, through which ran the main road to the west, seemed almost as sparsely populated as the country over which I had flown on my way to Moscow. Again I could not help but feel how isolated the people of the villages must have been before the days of the radio and motor-car. And gazing on the Russian countryside, I marveled at the genius of the Russian composers — Rimsky-Korsakov, Mussorgsky, Borodin, Tchaikovsky — who better than those of any other land had evoked the atmosphere of their country — its vast distances, its far horizons which are a constant challenge to the nomad, and the feeling of nostalgia which it stirs in the breast of Russian and stranger alike.

At two o'clock we turned off the highway to the town of Vyazma, one hundred and thirty-five miles to the west of Moscow. It was here that Napoleon gave the order for the advance on the Russian capital, and here the Russians attacked his dwindling forces on the way back. It was a rambling town of low wooden houses with wooden fretwork around the windows and under the eaves.

We stopped at the International Hotel, a two-story stucco building, where we were to spend the night. Lunch took three hours. Russian hospitality is a fearsome thing, and anyone who believes that food and wine are to be taken only in moderate quantities should avoid Russians, whether they be red, white, or of any other tint. We started off with caviar and vodka. Then came *zakuski*, or Russian hors-d'oeuvres, followed by delicious cabbage soup with sour cream, and chicken with rice. I forget what came after, perhaps because we also had three or four kinds of wine.

Then in a mellow mood we set off by car for a near-by airdrome. Although the Germans had claimed that they were near Vyazma in July, we saw no sign that the countryside had been fought over. Women and barefoot children halted by the side of the road to watch us pass. Evidently there had been no evacuation of civilians from this region. As we drove along, fighter planes of the new type that we had heard about in Moscow kept coming in from the west and sailed down behind a row of trees ahead of us.

We turned off the road we had been following and came to a cluster of wooden buildings at a clearing in a pine forest. The planes must have landed near-by but there was nothing to show that we were at an airdrome — no hangars, no wireless masts, no barracks. A gray car sped across the clearing, and when it stopped near us a young man in fur-lined flying togs bounded out. Although he looked almost boyish, he had the two gold stars of a major-general on his collar. He introduced himself as Major-General Georgi Zakharov of the Red Air Force. He was thirty-one years old.

'The planes you saw,' he said, 'were just coming back from a raid on a German airdrome near Smolensk. If we hurry along, you will be able to see some of them and talk to the pilots.'

We followed him to the edge of the clearing. Young men in flying togs began to appear from nowhere. Then we caught sight of some of the planes. They had already been hidden away under the pines and covered with pine branches. The General ordered the branches to be taken off one of them so that we could inspect it. It was the new type of fighter known as the MIG-3 which had been developed in such secrecy that foreign intelligence services knew little or nothing about it when the German invasion started. Foreign officers in Moscow had told me that it was better than the Messerschmitt 109

and probably as good a plane as the British Spitfire, which had generally been recognized as the best fighter of the war.

The MIG looked like a cross between the American Curtiss P-40 and the British Hurricane. It had the slim tapered nose of the Curtiss and an undercarriage like the Hurricane with the wheels retracting inward into the bottom of the fuselage. But it was smaller and more compact than any of the British or American fighters. While the world thought that the Russians were struggling along with old air-cooled engines, they had perfected a liquid-cooled motor which enabled them to streamline this little plane to perfection.

When the branches were taken off the right wing, I noticed that a hole about a foot in diameter had been torn in the top surface and that the wing was of plywood. The Russians seemed to be a step ahead of the other nations which had been experimenting with plastic and plywood planes. Their great veneer and plywood industry had developed wings like these, which instead of being made by slow woodworking methods were moulded under steam pressure. One advantage of using plywood for wings was the saving in aluminum — the Soviets' biggest aluminum plant near Leningrad had been damaged or destroyed. Another was that planes with wooden wings were easier to repair than all-metal ones — it was said to be a simple matter to 'unbutton' the wings from the metal fuselage and 'button' new wings in their place. And the Russian pilots claimed that the MIG could dive as steeply as any plane with metal wings. I could not check this, but I could see that the wing had not splintered when hit by an anti-aircraft shell.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of the MIG, however, was its armament. This included a secret weapon, the details of which we were asked not to discuss. It was a rocket bomb, something which foreign air forces had experimented with unsuccessfully, and it was said to be especially effective against tanks.

General Zakharov introduced us to the pilot who had flown the damaged plane back from Smolensk. He was a nineteen-year-old second lieutenant, six feet tall, and he wore the kind of leather flying togs used by the American Army and Navy air forces. When we questioned him, we found him to be just as reticent about his exploits as the average R.A.F. man.

'I dived down from three thousand meters and released my bombs at three hundred meters,' he said. 'Just as I came out of the dive an anti-aircraft shell hit me. That's what made the hole in the wing.'

'Did it give you a jolt?' one of the correspondents asked.

'It did shake the plane a bit,' he replied, 'but I didn't have much trouble getting back.'

## 2

That night, after another heavy barrage of caviar, vodka, and *zakuski*, Lieutenant-General Vassily Sokolovsky joined us at the International Hotel. He was the chief of staff of Marshal Timoshenko, who was then in command on the central front. We had expected Soviet officers to be reticent and perhaps even furtive in their talk with foreigners as a result of the purge, but Sokolovsky, like Zakharov, spoke as freely as any army officer ever speaks about military operations. Long after midnight he remained at the head of our table, patiently answering our questions. He was forty-three years old and combined the alert mind of a young man with the quiet assurance of an experienced commander. With his classic features, black hair, and well-cut uniform, he made a fine figure.

'The *Blitzkrieg* has failed in the sense that it has now developed into a continuous grinding of German materials and men,' he told us. 'What is now going on is a process like that of Verdun in the last war, but ten or a hundred times more

intensive because the weapons of destruction on the Soviet side — planes, tanks, guns — are much more powerful than the weapons used at that time. It was by stabilizing the central front that we made possible this process of wearing down German resources.'

Sokolovsky then explained how the front had been stabilized. When he said that the will of the Soviet people was the first factor in this stabilization, he gave a clue to the whole Soviet attitude toward this war in which the fate of nations has been determined by the strength of their will to resist. Every Soviet citizen, he said, every officer and man of the Red Army had determined that the enemy must be stopped, and the enemy was stopped. A second factor, he continued, was the steady increase in the amount of war material as a result of expanding production. But, he added, the Red Army could still use everything which America and Britain could send. A third factor was the hostility of the civil population and the activities of the partisans, or guerillas, which made the Germans send back many troops from the front to guard their communications. And finally, he said, the Germans were checked because their morale had declined and they had begun to have doubts of their own invincibility.

Young as they were for their jobs, Sokolovsky and Zakharov were not exceptional. In the days that followed, we found that the army of the central front was a young army all the way through. Marshal Timoshenko himself was only forty-six, and we met only one or two officers who looked older than that. The divisional commanders were forty-five or less, some of the captains under thirty, some of the lieutenants in their early twenties. All the enlisted men seemed to be under twenty-seven. This young army was eager to learn. I had previously found that the older officers of other armies were too prone to

talk about the way things were done in 1917 and to think in terms of the First World War. The Soviet officers were talking about ways of stopping the German armored forces today and hurling them back tomorrow.

'Study,' Marshal Voroshilov adjured Red Army officers before the war. 'Study hard, steadily perfecting your knowledge. You must know your specialty like the palm of your hand. Otherwise you will be unable to cope with the job entrusted to you and will disgrace yourself in the eyes of your subordinates.' The Soviets gave their officers plenty of opportunity to study. At the time the war started, the Soviet Union had sixty-three officers' schools for land troops, thirty-two flying schools and aeronautical engineering schools for the air force, fourteen military academies, and six military faculties in civil universities. These academies even conducted evening classes and correspondence courses for officers eager to advance in their profession.

The willingness of the Red Army to study and learn was shown by its mastery of the lessons of the Finnish War. It started badly and showed a lack of that initiative which is required in modern war. Then in January, 1940, Timoshenko, who had tried out a number of reforms in the Kiev military district, was put in charge. He built a replica of the Mannerheim Line behind the Soviet front and rehearsed his officers and troops in the break-through operations. When he turned them loose against the real Mannerheim Line, the war was soon over.

In the following spring, he was made Commissar for Defense and given authority to reform the army. His first move was to tighten up discipline. Officers' ranks and titles were restored: men who had merely been 'commanders' became generals, colonels, majors, and captains. Saluting was reintroduced. Separate messes and clubs were established for officers



and men. Nevertheless, the Red Army remained a democratic army. Although discipline was strict, it seemed to me that there was no gulf between officers and men. Any private who showed intelligence and enterprise could go to a training school and become an officer. Every soldier carried the baton of a marshal in his knapsack.

This in itself was an incentive to show initiative. And Timoshenko's other reforms were intended to stimulate that quality. He began to retrain the smaller units — squads, platoons, companies, and regiments — to fit them for a fast-moving war in which every man would have to think for himself. This retraining had not been completed when Hitler struck, but again the Soviet officers learned quickly. One of the biggest factors in the Germans' early successes was their abundance of experienced staff officers. Trained in the campaigns of Poland, Norway, the Low Countries, France, and the Balkans, these men knew all the tricks and shifts of a war of movement. But the young Soviet officers who had mastered their lessons in the military schools soon mastered the lessons of the battlefield. As the months went by the German margin of superiority was narrowed.

That is the advantage of having young officers like Sokolovsky and Zakharov. They learn.

# IO

## YARTSEVO FRONT

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### 1

**BOMBING** before breakfast should be outlawed like poison gas and germ warfare. In London I have often fallen into a peaceful sleep while the bombs were whistling down, but the bombs which fell on Vyazma the morning after our arrival taught me that courage may be only a matter of a full stomach.

It was just as I was getting out of bed at seven o'clock that I heard the familiar throbbing noise of approaching bombers.

'I think we're having visitors,' I said to Henry Cassidy of the Associated Press, who was sharing a room with me. He wasn't interested, however. He just pulled the covers over his ears.

Machine-guns began to chatter in the town. The boom of rapid-fire cannon and bigger anti-aircraft guns rent the air. Suddenly a bomb whistled down — the whistle was so short and angry that I knew it was close and ducked behind my bed

to escape flying débris. The explosion shook the little hotel, and the windowpane blew into the room. Cassidy, no longer sleepy, dived over my bed and landed on me. 'What the hell makes sensible guys like us come to a place like this?' he muttered. More bombs shrieked down and the hotel trembled like a ship in a storm. The guns boomed, then ceased firing, and in a moment we heard the welcome drone of fighter planes. The MIG's were after the bombers.

I stepped into the hall to see if our friends were all right. Cy Sulzberger was sitting on the floor, where he had dropped to escape flying glass. A window frame had fallen on Anurov, the chief censor, but he was unhurt. Vernon Bartlett was wriggling out from under his bed, a fine martial figure in tin hat and pyjamas. No one was injured.

I dressed and went out to see what had happened to the town. A stick of three bombs had fallen in a direct line with the hotel. A fraction of a second's difference in timing, and we would almost certainly have been hit. I walked down a side street where linesmen were already repairing telephone wires which had been blown down, and entered the courtyard of a two-story brick house, the back of which had been blasted in by a bomb. Four bodies had just been taken out of the wreckage and put on a truck. An ambulance was on the spot and nurses in khaki uniforms were bandaging wounded men and women. Neighbors were trying to comfort a mother who had lost her two daughters. A little white dog whose owner was missing ran about the courtyard looking for a friend.

Twenty yards down the street a second bomb had crashed through the roof of a dwelling, and a little farther on a third bomb had partly demolished another house. In the street, teams of men and women were shoveling the débris into little horse carts which came and went in an endless chain.

By the time I returned to the hotel, eight bodies had been re-

covered, the wounded had been given first aid and sent to the hospital, the telephone lines repaired, and much of the wreckage removed from the streets. The air-raid precautions in this provincial town could hardly have been better. And the people were just like the people of Britain and Spain. It was a stunned little group of women, old men, and a few children which had watched the bodies being put into the truck. But now the children were going off to school and the housewives were lining up at the stores for their daily rations. The ways and cares of everyday life were already pushing into the background this danger which came only infrequently and against which the town could do nothing. What I saw of bombing in Russia strengthened my belief that wars cannot be won on the cheap by air attacks on civilians. Bombs will kill a few people and break a few hearts, but they will not break the spirit of a nation which is given resolute leadership.

We drove out of Vyazma at ten o'clock and turned west on the Smolensk road. Herds of cattle were grazing in the fields, and the peasants were bringing in the grain, potatoes, and cabbages. We crossed the Dnieper on a new bridge and looked down on a flotilla of geese patrolling the narrow stream. On the far side we halted in a wood to cover our shiny cars with pine branches. Before we could start again, the drone of a bomber sent us to the cover of the trees, and in a moment three bombs dropped on the other side of the road. We waited a few minutes, then re-entered the cars and drove on.

Now the front seemed much nearer. Detachments of cavalry filed slowly across the broad fields. They carried rifles and bayonets, and their job was to wipe up any parachutists who might be dropped behind the lines. We were stopped more often at control points where officers and soldiers stood outside their dugouts watching traffic in both directions. The fox-holes and machine-gun nests along the road became more fre-

quent. Now and then we passed light tanks and armored cars, tractor-drawn howitzers, and truckloads of troops moving up to the front. Then we overtook a convoy of ambulances and soup kitchens. Anti-tank ditches fifteen feet deep and twenty-five feet wide ran across the clearings. Tanks lurked in the shadow of the forest. A squadron of Russian fighters raced across the sky in the direction of the German lines.

Shortly after noon we turned off the highway onto a muddy road which wound through a dense forest of birch and pine. An hour later we reached the headquarters of Colonel Kirilov's division, deep in the forest three miles east of the ruined village of Yartsevo. The Germans were just beyond the village and the communications center of Smolensk was forty miles to the southwest. Between the Germans and ourselves were the men in fox-holes and machine-gun nests — there was no continuous front of trenches. From their holes in the ground the machine-gunners and infantrymen covered the forest paths and clearings which the Germans would have to use for an attack. Where the clearings were broadest, the defense positions ran back in the greatest depth. Around us in the forest were the batteries of field guns, barking now and then as they hurled 'Voroshilov kilograms' at the enemy. Farther to the rear, under the cover of the trees, the tanks waited in readiness to sally forth and counterattack any German armored units which might break through the defenses. In his underground headquarters, the walls and ceiling of which were lined with clean white cheesecloth, Colonel Kirilov received the reports of his scouts and intelligence officers and directed the activities of his division. He was a sturdy-looking officer and he boasted that he had not asked for relief although his men had been in the line for two months and had fought against nine German divisions.

Machine-guns were chattering in the distance as we sat

down to lunch in a big tent. On guard at the entrance stood Sasha, the mascot of one of the regiments. He was a fourteen-year-old boy whose father and mother had been killed at Yartsevo. The regiment had found him in the ruins, adopted him, given him a soldier's uniform and a twenty-two-calibre revolver, and was now going to send him off to school.

Standing at the head of the table, Kirilov raised his glass of vodka. 'To the three allies — Britain, the United States of America, and the Soviet Union,' he said. 'To Prime Minister Churchill, President Roosevelt, and our Stalin.' We drank the toast and began to eat our cold sturgeon. Then the political commissar of the division stood up and raised his glass. He was a tall, heavy-faced man and wore on his tunic the twenty-year service medal of the Red Army and an ornate decoration for valor in the battle against the Japanese at Lake Hassan three years before. 'To the three democracies — Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union — and to the defeat of fascism.'

That was a point the political commissars never failed to make. The Soviet Union was fighting not only to defeat the German army but to destroy the hateful system of which the army was merely an instrument. This emphasis on the anti-fascist nature of the war also implied that the Soviets were not fighting the German people. When the original Anglo-Soviet alliance was ready for signature in July, 1941, Stalin himself had inserted one word to make its purpose clear: it was an alliance aimed against *Hitlerite* Germany. Not that the Soviet leaders had any illusions about quickly driving a wedge between the Nazi government and the German people. But common sense told them that if they wanted the German people one day to turn against their masters they must give them some reason to hope for merciful treatment. In spite of the efforts of the government and the political commissars, however, the Soviet soldier was becoming more and more anti-

German. The Russians, I believe, are slow to hate another people, but as they saw how the Germans waged war, they learned to hate them and to hate them as Germans.

## 2

Eighty per cent of the soldiers in the armies of the czars were illiterate. 'The stupidity of the czarist system prevented any attempt to sharpen the men's wits,' wrote Hamilton Fyffe, a British war correspondent with the Russian army in the First World War. 'Indeed there was a strong feeling among the rulers and the officer class that it would be dangerous to do that.' There was an unbridgeable gulf between officers and men. 'I found it revoltingly ironical,' says Fyffe, 'that officers should call their men "brothers" and treat them more brutally than they would their dogs or horses. I have often seen privates struck in the face for the most trifling faults, even for no fault at all. They were not looked on as human beings but as an inferior order of creation.'

In this kind of army it was only natural that little attention should be paid to the health of the men. Countless lives were lost for want of medical attention. Wounded men were dumped into boxcars in freezing weather, to die before they could reach the overcrowded hospitals. 'It was not surprising that most of our wounded had gangrene before they reached the base hospital and that we were reckoned to patch up for further service in the front line forty per cent less than the Germans,' wrote Sir Bernard Pares, the British historian, who served with the Russian forces in the First World War.

After our lunch at Colonel Kirilov's headquarters, we drove off to see how the Red Army took care of its men at the front. There had been no intensive fighting for over a week and there was no chance of seeing any action that day. Guided by caval-

rymen, who moved like wraiths through the forest, we drove to a field hospital just two miles behind the most advanced positions. Like Kirilov's headquarters, it was underground, and the walls and ceilings were covered with white cloth. Operating tables, surgical instruments, and beds looked as clean as any you would find in the hospitals of a big city. The operating room was lighted by electricity. The chief surgeon was a young woman dressed in khaki tunic, navy-blue skirt, and top boots. She had received her degree at the faculty of military medicine of Leningrad University.

This hospital was obviously on show for our benefit. I was therefore glad the following night when we dropped into a base hospital where we had not been expected. It was just as clean, however, and its staff of doctors and nurses looked just as efficient as those we saw here. And weeks later when American and British health experts inspected the military hospitals and health institutes in Moscow, they came away deeply impressed. The general health service was good, and in one branch, that of blood transfusion, the Russians seemed to lead the world.

From the field hospital, we drove to a dugout where a club had been established for non-commissioned officers and men. In one room, the troops were dancing one of the traditional Russian soldier dances to a spirited folk-song played by an orchestra of piano, accordion, and violin. We went through a tunnel into the library. The books on the shelves included, of course, the complete works of Lenin, but I also saw novels by Tolstoy, Dostoievsky, and Mikhail Sholokhov, the plays of Ibsen — and the poems of Heinrich Heine! He must have been a favorite of the Russians, for I later found a well-thumbed copy of his poems in the library of a collective farm near Moscow.

There were said to be thousands of these clubs along the



front. Even before the war, Voroshilov had boasted that the army had nineteen hundred clubs and a library of twenty-five million volumes. In the early days of the Revolution, the Bolsheviks coined the slogan, 'Every Red Army man is a literate man,' and as they fought for their lives they compelled the soldiers to master the alphabet and to learn to read and write. Later, with the spread of education under the Soviet régime, it was no longer necessary to teach recruits the fundamentals, but the army then offered them higher education and technical training. They were taught to be mechanics, engineers, electricians, and chemists, and if they had musical or artistic talent, they were encouraged to develop it. Perhaps that was one of the reasons why the Soviet soldiers had stood up so well under the heaviest assaults in military history.

As we sat in the library, the Soviet field guns in the woods around us opened up a steady barrage and the dugout shook. They were trying to break up an attack by a German infantry company on a near-by hill. The German guns failed to reply and, after hoping for a while that we might see some action, we gave up and drove back a mile or more to a schoolhouse where we spent the night.

## II

# PEASANTS AND PARTISANS

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### 1

Russian roads almost make you feel sorry for the Germans. Once you leave the main highways, you bounce over the kind of trails the stagecoaches must have followed across the American prairies.

Roads in Russia are simply a matter of tradition. Someone drives a cart across the plain or through the forest. From then on, that is a road. Other carts follow in a hit-or-miss fashion. No one thinks of drainage ditches or culverts. If the rains create mud-holes, the carts and cars swing around them. When that is no longer possible, the drivers cut branches and logs in the forest, put them in the ruts and mud-holes, take a running start, and splash on to the next obstacle. The Soviets, of course, have created fine strategic highways, but they are exceptional.

During a whole day on the side roads running north from the Yartsevo sector we were able to cover only fifty miles. Hour after hour we meandered through the clearings in the forests of pine and birch, part of those great forests of the Soviet Union which cover two billion acres. The autumn rains had saturated the ground and our light cars were usually up to their hubs in the mud. When the trail became impassable, we simply turned aside onto the turf. If the trees prevented this, our drivers cut branches and logs and laid them in the bad spots. The woods were full of troops, and often when a car was stuck they emerged silently from their bivouacs and quickly heaved it free.

These lateral roads were the weakest link in the Soviet communication system. That system, however, had stood up to the shock of war better than anyone had expected. Even in peacetime the density of traffic on Soviet railroads had been more than double that of American railroads in the boom year of 1929. Now, under the direction of Lazar Kaganovitch, Commissar for Railways and Stalin's handyman for impossible tasks, they were successfully carrying the great bulk of the war traffic. Road transport had also stood up surprisingly well. In the years before the war the Soviet press had repeatedly criticized the inadequate system of truck transport and condemned the 'barbaric habits' of poorly trained drivers who quickly turned high-quality trucks into junk. The Red Army's drivers, however, must have been much better than the rest. We had seen them driving carefully at twenty miles an hour on the broad Moscow-Smolensk highway, and here in the forest we also saw them getting their loads through to the front without abusing their machines. Some of their ZIS three-ton trucks had emergency treads which could be lowered in place of the rear wheels. Some of the others had wheels in front and caterpillar treads behind. But all of them, even

those without treads of any kind, sailed right along, leaving our light cars struggling hard behind them.

This was one of the poorest parts of European Russia, and we passed only the smallest and most primitive farming communities. The villages consisted of six or seven cabins built of logs, their seams caulked with moss from the forest. Even within range of the German guns, the peasants were at work. We overtook some of them on the road, the wife always riding with the husband in the little cart drawn by a scrawny horse with the Russian arched yoke over its neck. All the young men were gone from the farms. Gray-bearded muzhiks and women in quilted coats were driving the horses and tractors which drew the harrows across the fields. On the banks of the village stream, housewives gathered to wash their clothes, beating them with a wooden paddle in the traditional fashion. Often the barking of field-guns in the near-by woods drowned out their chatter.

Why did the peasants stay on their farms so close to the front and risk capture or death? They may have been afraid to disobey the government's orders to stay where they were. But any such fear must have been more than outweighed by fear of the Germans. The newspapers were full of stories about German atrocities against peasants, and the Soviet government had distributed posters which anyone could understand showing German troops taking away from the farmers their cattle and grain. If fear had swayed the peasants, they would probably have taken their chance with the Soviet government and fled before the Germans. Peasants of all countries, however, had almost invariably clung to their farms in time of invasion. Whatever were the roots which held them to the soil, they had not been weakened by collectivization. Some of my friends in Moscow had told me that the great mass of peasants were undoubtedly much better off on collective farms than

they had been before. I had no way of checking this, except indirectly. In its propaganda to the peasants, the Soviet government always warned them that the Germans were bringing back the old proprietors and disbanding the collective farms. The prospect of a return to the 'good old days' was apparently something to make the peasants fight.

## 2

In the afternoon the clearings broadened out and we came to the first battlefields. We had been driving north, parallel with the front, in the direction of the recaptured town of Dukhovchino, which lay sixty miles northeast of Smolensk. Tanks and motorized units could not operate in the forests, where the Russians, with their flair for woodcraft, could meet the Germans on better than even terms. But on the plains the Germans could use their peerless armored units and their skill in maneuvering.

On the plain which now opened before us, a furious tank battle had been fought. For several miles to the north and east the ground had been lacerated and literally churned up by tank treads. The grass was scorched and the few dwellings in the region had been reduced to charred ruins. Further on we passed a battered church and a few heaps of rubble which had been homes, but there was no sign of human beings. This territory between Yartsevo and Dukhovchino had been recaptured in the recent Soviet offensive, and when the Germans retreated they had compelled the peasants to go with them.

Near the ruined village of Sediva we saw the wreckage of German tanks and troop carriers which had been knocked out by Russian anti-tank guns. An hour or two later, at six o'clock in the evening, we arrived at the headquarters of Colonel Mikhail Yakovitch Dodonov, commander of a Siberian divi-

sion which boasted that it had never ceded a foot of ground since it entered the line in July. Dodonov was a massive six-footer and his Siberians were built to the same scale, but the political commissar of the division was an undersized officer who had to make up in verbosity what he lacked in stature. We were only a mile from the German lines and he wanted to take us up to see them, but this was ruled out by Colonel Baltin, our guide from the Soviet Information Bureau. This was as close as correspondents ever were to the actual fighting front in Russia.

Warning us not to stray off the paths because the German mine fields were not entirely cleaned up, Dodonov and his officers led us to a table in a dense pine grove where we had dinner. While we ate roast goose and drank Soviet champagne, the Colonel and the political commissar told us of the success just scored by the division. A German reconnaissance plane passed directly overhead and anti-aircraft shrapnel from the Russian batteries pattered down around us, but Dodonov only glanced up for a moment and then went on with his story.

'In order to fight the Germans,' he said, 'you must discover their weak points. Then you can beat them. We discovered that the Germans are very bad at night fighting, especially in the woods, so we decided to strike at night and we won most of our successes in night battles. In some of these battles the Germans ran away in panic, throwing away their arms and leaving their tanks behind.'

'It was as a result of these night battles that the force of General Boldin, which had been surrounded, was liberated. We struck from the east and Boldin struck from the west until we made contact near here.'

This exploit was a Soviet epic. The remnants of Boldin's division had been cut off near Minsk in the early days of the war. For forty-five days Boldin and several thousand of his

men remained behind the German lines. Little by little they fought their way eastward, hiding in the forests, striking at the German lines of communication, and then vanishing into the forest again. Late in August they had traveled more than two hundred miles from their starting-point and were somewhere to the northeast of Smolensk. A plan was worked out for them to rejoin the Soviet central army. As Dodonov's division attacked the Germans from the east, Boldin and his men pounced on their backs, cut a hole through the German lines, and made contact with Dodonov's forces.

It was the partisans, or guerrillas, and the peasants who stayed behind who made exploits like this possible. They had brought food to Boldin, kept him informed of German movements, and helped him in his forays. I talked to many Soviet officers about the partisan movement and found that they all looked upon it as a regular branch of warfare. The partisans were almost as much a part of the Red Army as the artillery, the cavalry, and the chemical corps.

Partisan warfare was nothing new in Russia. It was the work of the partisans against Napoleon which had given the war of 1812 the character of a 'people's war.' In the Smolensk district, the peasants had risen spontaneously against the French. A young hussar, Denis Davidov, was the first to appreciate the military value of this partisan movement, and he won permission from Marshal Kutuzov to raise flying detachments of hussars and Cossacks to penetrate the French lines, rally the peasants, and harry the French communications. Napoleon bitterly resented this kind of warfare and repeatedly complained to Kutuzov and Alexander II that it was contrary to all the rules of war. 'As though any rules existed for the slaughter of men,' commented Tolstoy half a century later.

Tolstoy made Davidov the model for his character, Lieutenant Denisov, in *War and Peace*. Davidov was also the in-

spiration of Chapaev, Katovsky, and other valiant partisan leaders in the Russian Civil War and wars of intervention. So little had partisan warfare changed since his time that a two-cent biography of Davidov which appeared before the war made an excellent manual of instruction for the partisans operating against Hitler. At a book kiosk in Moscow I also found a vest-pocket handbook for partisans with instructions for orientation by the stars, weather forecasting, and demolition work.

Stalin himself had laid down the tasks assigned to the partisans in the speech he delivered in July, copies of which were distributed behind the advancing Germans.

'In areas occupied by the enemy,' he said, 'partisan units, mounted and on foot, must be formed and diversionary groups organized to combat enemy troops, foment partisan warfare everywhere, blow up bridges and roads, damage telephone and telegraph lines, and set fire to forests, stores, and transports. Conditions must be made unbearable for the enemy and all his accomplices. They must be hounded and annihilated at every step and all their measures frustrated.'

Red Army men who had been cut off during the retreat joined the partisans rather than surrender and became leaders of some of the bands. Hunters and trappers, of whom there are millions in the Soviet Union, peasants, forest guards, school teachers, and municipal authorities swelled the movement. Women and boys who stayed in the villages acted as the eyes and ears of the men hiding in the woods. These great forests through which we were passing were ideal cover. The Germans could police the villages and plains, but they could not hope to clean up the incredibly vast forests of Russia.

When a man joined the partisans he took a solemn oath. 'For our gutted towns and villages,' it said, 'for the death of our children, for the tortures, violence, and indignities suffered



by our people, I swear cruel, merciless, and unrelenting vengeance on the enemy.' The partisan put himself under military discipline and accepted drumhead justice. 'If I betray, I must be killed at the hands of my comrades,' he swore.

In the forests, the partisans had caches of food and arms, though not so much as they could have used. Their weapons ranged from pitchforks and old shotguns to machine-guns, grenades, and even light tanks captured from the Germans. For special jobs, such as the destruction of an important bridge, they often received supplies from planes which flew low over the forests at night and dropped dynamite and grenades in response to prearranged signals from the ground. Some of the partisans led a sort of Robin Hood existence. There were stories of partisan leaders who had ambushed German troops after they had plundered peasant communities and then restored the loot to the peasants. Some had taken care of Russian wounded left behind in the retreat. Some had slipped through the lines to give the Red Army information about German artillery positions, air fields, and supply dumps. And if there was no large-scale fifth column in western Russia, it was partly because the partisans were always there to take care of a traitor.

In one of the many prophetic passages of *War and Peace*, Tolstoy established the moral significance of the partisan in the Second World War: 'Happy the people that will not, as the French did in 1812, saluting according to the rules, gracefully and cautiously offer the sword hilt to the magnanimous conqueror. Happy the people who, in the moment of trial, ask no questions how others would act by the recognized rules in such cases, but with ease and directness pick up the first cudgel that comes handy and deal blows with it, till resentment and revenge give way to contempt and pity.'

## 3

'You will see something interesting tonight,' said Colonel Dodonov at the end of our meal. 'Because of our tactics, the Germans are very nervous. They fire tens of thousands of flares every night so they will know where we are and what we are up to. We have no objection. In fact, we are only too glad to have this light free of charge.'

It was almost dark. Field guns in the forest began to bark and shells screamed over our heads. We entered our cars and started for a field hospital where we hoped to find shelter for the night. We traveled without lights as the Germans had shelled the road the previous night. Henry Cassidy and I had the bad luck to travel in the last car of the convoy with a driver who had never been off the pavements of Moscow. We kept straying off the road, such as it was, and soon lost contact with the other cars. The driver was stubborn and scared. He could not see his way and refused to take directions from us. We slithered sideways down hills, bumped across fields pitted by shells and mortar bombs, and smashed our heads against the roof as he slammed on the brakes.

We had no idea where we were going. Then ahead of us in the darkness rose the music of an accordion and men's voices singing:

Rolling plain, far-flung prairie,  
Heroes go riding across the prairie.

We found ourselves back on the road and passed a group of soldiers singing in the dark. A minute later we were off the road again, bounding and slipping through the night. Suddenly Cassidy and I flew out of our seats as the car came to an abrupt stop. We stepped out and discovered that the driver had landed us in a shell hole. Luckily it was only large enough to hold the front wheels. The three of us tried to push the car

back onto the level but it was too heavy. We were almost exhausted when the music of the accordion and the voices of the soldiers came out of the darkness:

Maidens fair, raise your eyes,  
We are all prepared for battle,  
Gaze on our sure-footed horses . . .

Somehow they caught sight of us, and in a moment half a dozen husky Siberians had heaved the car out of the hole.

As we set off again, the Germans began to fire star shells behind us. They burst high above the horizon and drifted slowly down, casting a brilliant flickering light. We caught up with the rest of the convoy and turned onto a slightly better road running parallel with the front. Every few seconds a flare burst over on our left. At midnight we reached the field hospital, where two pretty Siberian nurses in khaki uniforms gave us tea before we lay down on mattresses stuffed with fresh straw. Nothing makes a better bed, and although an artillery barrage rumbled all through the night and the Germans dropped a few bombs, we had a sound sleep.

The next morning the Siberian nurses gave us a hearty breakfast and we set out to the south for the battlefield of Yelnya. Rain had been falling all night and the roads were worse than the day before, but luckily a platoon of Siberian troops accompanied us to pull us out of the mud-holes. I have never seen men work like those Siberians. Wearing hooded rain capes over their long greatcoats, they rode in an uncovered truck at the tail of the convoy. Whenever a car became stuck, which happened at least every five minutes, they jumped down and ran forward through the mud, carrying their long rifles and bayonets like popguns in one hand. They would heave the car out with a great good will, run back to the truck with their long coat-tails flapping in the wind, and climb onto their rain-soaked platform. All day long they kept us moving, never

losing their energy or good humor. Late in the afternoon when we said good-bye to them, they were still running strong.

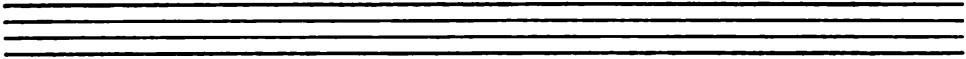
We crossed the Moscow-Smolensk highway and drove south through the village of Safonovo. Here the railway was working at full capacity and the five tracks and sidings showed no trace of bombing. We pushed on in the twilight to the town of Dorogobuzh, where Napoleon had tried unsuccessfully to force a battle on the retreating Russians. Because of a misunderstanding, no quarters had been prepared for us here. We sat in our cars for two hours while German bombers droned overhead. Then we crossed the Dnieper on a temporary bridge and drove through the town.

Dorogobuzh was one of the martyred towns of Russia. Before the war it was a pretty little community of pink and white stucco buildings on the hills above the Dnieper. Now it was in ruins. At four o'clock one morning in July German bombers opened an attack, returning again and again with loads of high explosive and incendiary bombs. The population of twelve thousand was reduced to three thousand through death and evacuation. As we drove through the streets in the darkness, the town took on the beauty of old ruins. The roofless buildings with their irregular columns might have been Grecian temples.

We found our quarters for the night at an army camp about a mile out of town. The troops turned over to us a small country house and made beds of clean straw on the floor. They gave us an excellent dinner of hors d'oeuvres, minced meat cutlets, canned eggplant, and *smetana*, a rich sour cream. This was apparently the meal served in the officers' mess. Later I saw what the soldiers were eating — cabbage soup with meat, *kasha* or buckwheat, and vast quantities of that satisfying Russian black bread which is almost a meal in itself.

# I2

## STALIN'S WATCHDOGS



### 1

SOME day a monument will be raised on the battlefield of Yelnya. For here the legend of German invincibility was shattered. Here a man could stand and say for the first time, 'This soil has been freed from Hitler.' The significance of the battle was clear at the time, but it became doubly clear when Stalin himself admitted months later that the Russian soldier had been awed by tales of German invincibility in the early days of the war.

It was late in July when the Germans burst into Yelnya from the west and turned north toward the Moscow highway. Their armored divisions moved so rapidly that the Soviets had no time to apply the scorched-earth policy. The tractor station fell into their hands and the crops were left for them to gather. This often happened in the first few months of the war; the

Soviet people were willing enough to destroy their factories, bridges, dams, and crops, but the Germans moved too fast for them.

Behind the German armored divisions came the infantry. A big bulge was made in the Soviet lines, and the Germans prepared to use it as a starting-point for a drive north to the highway — and to Moscow. It was something like the bulge at Sedan which proved fatal to France, but Timoshenko did what General Weygand failed to do — he turned the bulge into a sack and squeezed the Germans out of it. The mouth of the sack lay to the west of Yelnya. When Timoshenko began his offensive operations late in August it was only seven and a half miles wide. The Russians applied pressure to both sides of this narrow opening and their artillery threw a curtain of fire across it. In a few days they had narrowed the gap to less than three miles. At the same time they began to attack the bottom and sides of the sack north and east of Yelnya. The Germans at these points knew that the mouth of the sack was being narrowed and they hurriedly retreated through Yelnya and on to the west. Here they had to pass through the three-mile gap. All day and all night the Soviet artillery shelled this gap while tanks and infantry battered the flanks of the retreating Germans. Eight German divisions, over one hundred and twenty thousand men, the Soviets estimated, were chewed to pieces in this 'meat-grinder.' The Red Army advanced seventeen to twenty-three miles on a narrow front, not much materially, but a great moral encouragement to an army which had been kept on the defensive since the start of the war.

A little political commissar who had fought in the battle was our guide to the battlefield. We came out of the woods onto a broad plain seven miles north of Yelnya, the farthest point of the German advance. Every twenty yards or so on either side of the road were fox-holes four or five feet deep.

In these little one-man forts, Russian soldiers had waited to halt the tanks coming down the road from Yelnya. It was a dangerous assignment. They were supposed to let the tank come within a few yards, then hurl a grenade or 'bouquet' of grenades into the treads or at the gun apertures. If they timed their shot right, they might cripple the tank; if they miscalculated by a fraction of a second, the guns of the tank would probably blow their heads off.

The Soviet troops had come out of the woods at this point to attack the bottom of the sack. At the ruined village of Ushakovo, which lay ahead of us up the road, the Germans had dug two long lines of trenches in the style of the First World War to cover the approach to Yelnya. These trenches ran from the road along a ridge to the left up to a height which dominated the region. The Russians had to get possession of that height in order to drive the Germans out of their fortifications and back toward Yelnya. It was the Russian artillery, of which we had heard nothing but praise from infantry officers, which did the trick. With uncanny accuracy it smashed in the German trenches and laid down a barrage on the road by which the trenches were supplied. Then the Soviet infantrymen with their long three-edged bayonets charged across the fields of red clover and turned the Germans out of their trenches. With the height in Russian hands, the Germans had been compelled to abandon all their positions in the region, and their flight was quickened by the narrowing of the gap to the west.

We followed the political commissar across the fields, where the bitter smell of death still lingered. The German dead had been buried in their own trenches, the Soviet dead in a great burial mound on the height. A neat wooden fence encircled the mound and on it was a plaque inscribed: 'Brotherly grave of those who died like heroes in the struggle against German

fascism, July 29 to September 5, 1941.' Morning-glories were already growing on the mound.

Only one habitation remained in the village of Ushakovo — a wooden birdhouse which the peasants had put in a birch tree. Somehow it had escaped the bombardment which leveled everything else in the village. A mile farther on we came to another ash heap which had been the village of Ustinovo. Here the Germans had built an artillery command post for the region. Four terraces had been cut into the side of a hill about seventy feet high. On each terrace was a row of dug-outs, strongly reinforced with pine logs and sandbags. In the shelter of the hill they had put their guns and a tank which had become immobile but whose cannon they used to augment their artillery. The place looked as if they had intended to stay, but they had abandoned it without a fight in order to avoid being cut off. Several hundred cases of mortar shells had been left behind.

Another mile on the road to Yelnya and we saw a German order nailed to a post. 'The village of Petraninov is a zone of military operations,' it read. 'For this reason the population is ordered to leave this place by eight o'clock tonight and go to Yelnya or farther to the rear. Any civilian still in the village after that hour will be shot on sight.' This helped to explain why we had not seen any peasants in the recaptured territory, either here or around Yartsevo.

Now, however, we chanced upon a few. In the village two unpainted log cabins with thatched roofs had somehow escaped destruction. Three peasant families, which had fled to the woods at the coming of the Germans, were living there. With them was an old blind woman who had gone mad. The Germans, they told us, had taken everything — pots, pans, and furniture.

From a distance Yelnya looked like a peaceful country town



still untouched by the war, but on entering it we found it to be almost deserted. Carrion crows, the great gray and black crows of eastern Europe, were haunting the burned-out ruins. On the night of September 4, we were told, the Germans had locked the inhabitants in the church and set fire to the town before retreating through the 'meat-grinder' to the west. Through the windows of the church, which had apparently been used as a warehouse, the inhabitants saw the smoke and flame rising from their homes. There was not a pane of glass left in Yelnya and hardly a roof. Only the walls and tiled stoves were left of the houses.

The roar of the continuing battle came from the west as we left Yelnya at six-thirty in the evening. We drove east on a fairly good road between fields of uncut grain. On all sides was the wreckage of tanks, armored cars, and planes. By the side of the road were stacks of cases containing German artillery and mortar shells which the Russians were taking to salvage dumps.

Just before dark we arrived at the peaceful village of Islednivo, seventeen miles east of Yelnya, and stopped for the night at an old country house.

## 2

My neighbor at dinner was the little bespectacled political commissar who had guided us across the battlefield. So many strange stories had been told about the commissars that I had seized every opportunity to watch them at work and to talk to them about their jobs.

The post of political commissar was nothing new. In 1812 when Marshal Kutuzov evacuated Moscow without a battle, Alexander I sent a number of personal representatives to his headquarters to make sure that the old general would carry

out his orders for a more aggressive campaign. These representatives were, perhaps, the first political commissars in the Russian Army. But commissars had existed long before Napoleon and Kutuzov. The Italian city states of the Middle Ages, for instance, had used them to make sure that their mercenary officers earned their money and did not betray their employers.

The modern commissar, however, dated from the French Revolution. Although most of the professional officers of the French Army were royalist in sympathy, the Republic needed their experience in creating its new armies. So it sent commissars to keep an eye on them. The Bolsheviks were faced with the same problem as the First Republic and they quickly installed the commissar system. Professional officers of the czarist army were retained to drill and lead the troops but incorruptible communists were attached to them to guard against betrayal. As a guarantee to the rank and file that the officers were acting in good faith, the commissars countersigned their orders. They also promoted the cause of communism in the army, giving the men instruction in the teachings of Marx and Lenin and preparing them to be good citizens of the Soviet State. One of the first of these Civil War commissars was Joseph Stalin. A letter in which he defined the rôle of the regimental commissar to his subordinates on the southern front is still frequently quoted: 'Whereas the regimental commander is the head of the regiment, the commissar must be the father, the heart and soul of his regiment.'

After the Civil War, the commissars stayed on. As communists, the Soviet leaders looked upon the army as a necessary evil. They needed it to protect the infant Soviet Union against the 'capitalist encirclement,' but in certain ways they feared it. Remembering the history of the French Revolution, they were determined that no Red Napoleon should arise

from the army to put an end to the communist experiment. For this reason, although the status of the commissars changed from time to time, the government always maintained a strong Political Department in the Red Army to keep it loyal to the Revolution and to the Communist Party.

The first change in the status of the commissars came in 1924. The old czarist officers who were considered undependable had been weeded out and replaced by men who were not only trained officers but trusted members of the Party. These officers began to try to take over full control of their units instead of sharing control with the commissars. The Party encouraged this tendency and created the post of commander-commissar for trustworthy communist officers, thus permitting them to lead their units in a dual capacity. Each commander-commissar was given a political assistant, subordinate to him, to help him with the political education of the men. Those units which did not have commander-commissars continued to have both a military commander and a political commissar sharing the leadership.

This arrangement continued until 1937 when the purge struck the Red Army. The exact nature of the charges against Marshal Tukhachevsky and the other high officers who were shot has never been revealed, but they were supposed to have conspired with Germany and Japan to overthrow the Stalin régime. They were also said to have tampered with the Political Department with the aim of weakening the army's loyalty to the Party. One of the allegations which was later made publicly against Tukhachevsky was that he wanted to make the political commissar a mere 'cultural worker.' Similar accusations were made against Marshal Gamarnik, the chief of the Political Department, who committed suicide just before Tukhachevsky's arrest. He was alleged to have filled the important political jobs in the army with 'utter degenerates'

whose task was to hold down the commissars and political workers who were faithful to Stalin. He was also accused of preventing Red Army men from entering the Young Communist League, and in general with hampering the communist education of the army. Apparently alarmed by the danger that the army might escape from its control, the Stalin government put the political commissars back in every unit with all their old powers. Once again, every order of the military commander had to be countersigned by the commissar. The chief task of the commissars, however, was to ferret out spies and conspirators and clean up the army. They also retained supervision over the political and cultural development of the troops.

As successor to Gamarnik at the head of the Political Department, Stalin appointed a Bolshevik incorruptible, Lev Zakharovitch Mekhlis. He had joined the Party in 1918 and served through the Civil War as a political commissar. He was known as a man of culture, holding the degree of Doctor of Economic Sciences from the Institute of Red Professors, and he had been editor of the Party newspaper, *Pravda*, since 1930. With great energy Mekhlis set to work to 'bolshelize the whole Red Army,' 'to make every unit a stronghold of socialism.'

'The commissars and political workers are the eyes and ears of the Party in the Red Army,' he said. 'Nothing should escape the keen Bolshevik attention of the commissars. They should know all that is going on in every corner of the Red Army; they must be faithful instruments of the general line of the Stalinist Central Committee, and, together with the Party organizations, nip all treason in the bud, safeguard our beloved army from spies, and see to it that no enemy penetrates into our ranks.'

Mekhlis took trusted communists from offices and factories and made them temporary commissars. These men and the rest of the political organization worked with such zest to clean

up the army that, as Mekhlis himself later admitted, many injustices occurred and about half the officers and men expelled from the Party had to be reinstated. While this purge was going on, thousands of young men were being put through military-political academies to become fitted for the post of commissar. The commissars had always been required to master military as well as political knowledge. Now they were given specialized training: commissars with aviation units had to be skilled flyers, and commissars with artillery units had to be trained artillerymen. Mekhlis also developed the educational work of the political branch of the army. The commissars gave courses to the officers and men on the history of the Communist Party, the history of the Soviet Union, the history of the different nationalities of the U.S.S.R., Soviet foreign policy, and the principles of Stalin's Constitution of 1936. They also tried to stimulate the cultural development of the men by organizing orchestras, song and dance ensembles, and courses in languages and technical subjects.

It was with the commissar system in full force that the Red Army marched against Finland. Officers in foreign armies attributed the early failures of the Russians to this system of divided responsibility in the leadership. The Soviets never admitted this, but in the summer of 1940 the post of commissar was abolished. It was said that the political education of the Red Army was now in such a satisfactory state that attention could be turned to the other factor required for a high degree of military discipline, the authority of the military commanders.

Whatever the reasons, the abolition of the commissars followed Timoshenko's other reforms designed to strengthen the authority of the officers. Timoshenko himself had been one of the first commander-commissars when he became head of the Third Cavalry Corps in 1925. The system now instituted was

somewhat like the old commander-commissar arrangement. The military commander of each unit was given full responsibility for political work as well as for military leadership, but a 'deputy commander in charge of political relations' was to assist him with the political education of the men.

Thus when Hitler attacked the Soviet Union the professional officers were in full command of the army and the political workers were in a subordinate position. On July 16, 1941, however, a decree of the Supreme Soviet reinstated the commissars with all their former powers. Once again the commander's orders had to be countersigned by the commissar.

A political commissar is the representative of the Party and the Government in the Red Army [the decree said]. Equally with the commander he bears full responsibility for the fulfillment of all military tasks by the fighting unit, for its steadfastness in battle and its unwavering readiness to fight to the last drop of blood against the enemies of our country and to defend honorably every inch of Soviet soil. . . .

A political commissar is obliged to give every sort of aid to the commander who honorably and wholeheartedly carries out all fighting tasks, to strengthen his authority as a commander and to exercise strict control over the fulfillment of all orders issued by the High Command.

A political commissar must give timely warning to the High Command and Government concerning commanders and political workers who are not worthy of the title of commander or political worker and who by their actions besmirch the honor of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army.

Commissars, the decree continued, should set a personal example of courage in battle, instill contempt for death in the troops, wage a ruthless struggle against panic-mongers and deserters, and nip in the bud every attempt at treason. Secondary duties of the commissars, not mentioned by the decree, included the entertainment of the men in camp and at train stops. These teachers, chaplains, watchdogs, and all-round

handymen also had to see that every company had an accordion, the traditional companion of the Russian soldier.

The political organization, as we had seen it in the field, was built like this: At the bottom of the scale, in every infantry company, artillery battery, and air squadron, were the political workers. These young men were responsible to the commissar of their regiment, who in turn was responsible to the commissar of his division. Each divisional commissar worked under the orders of the military council of his army, which again was under the Political Department of the Red Army headed by Mekhlis.

The most enthusiastic members of this hierarchy were the young political workers, men with the rank of captain or lieutenant. They were the kind of ingenuous boys you would like to have on your college football team. During the afternoon we spent in the Yartsevo sector I had ridden with one of them, a fair-haired, round-cheeked youngster, who explained to me some of their work.

'In the Political Department, we believe that men fight better if they know what they are fighting for,' he said, and went on in a mixture of Russian, English, and German. 'We teach our men that we are not fighting for more territory like the Germans. We are fighting to destroy fascism so that we can go back to work in peace and develop our country in a democratic way, the way of the Stalinist Constitution. Our men are not sheep. They appreciate it when we discuss politics with them.'

'Do you know what Marshal Voroshilov said? He said that the men in capitalist armies are forbidden to be active in politics. We want as many of our men as possible to be active in the Young Communist League or the Communist Party or to be good non-party Bolsheviks.'

During the dinner at Islednivo I tried to clear up the relationship between commissars and officers.

'Aren't the officers rather resentful that commissars have been given authority in military matters?' I asked the little divisional commissar.

'All commissars have military training,' he replied. 'They have gone to military schools or served many years in the Red Army. Their viewpoint is therefore the same as the commanders' and they get along together very well.'

'But suppose the commander of a division and the divisional commissar don't agree on a certain order, what happens?'

'Both the commissar and the commander have heads on their shoulders. Do you think that when the safety of the Army and the Soviet Union is at stake they are going to quarrel? There aren't any disagreements.'

'But,' I persisted, 'they're both human. What if a disagreement should occur?'

'If a disagreement occurred, it would be referred to the next highest officer. I, for instance, would refer it to the military council of this army. But I can assure you that in practice there are no such disagreements.'

That was as much enlightenment as I ever obtained from any commissar or political worker. They all emphasized that the commander and commissar were almost always friends and worked together in a friendly way.

As far as I could tell, the political hierarchy did not hamper the work of the higher officers. Timoshenko and officers of general's rank, for instance, issued their military orders and they were apparently countersigned by the military council attached to their staffs as a mere formality. When those orders reached divisional headquarters, however, the divisional commissar saw to it that the commander carried them out.

Officers in foreign armies continue to regard the commissar system as impractical and as a hindrance to the commanders. The Soviets still feel, however, that in a war in which treachery



and incompetence have played such an important part, the commissar has a job to do.

## 3

It was our last night at the front. Although we had witnessed no fighting, we had made the acquaintance of Soviet officers and men and seen more of the Red Army than most foreign officers who had been in Moscow for several years. This army had seemed to us to be an excellent fighting machine. It was not the ragamuffin army of the czars nor the Asiatic horde described in so many dispatches from Helsinki during the Finnish War. The men were sturdy, well-clothed, and well-equipped, and adequate attention was being paid to their welfare. The officers were young and enterprising. On the material side, the artillery appeared to be the strongest arm. Officers of all branches agreed that in accuracy and volume of fire it was far superior to the German. On the other hand, the Soviets seemed to be short of tanks and bombers. This was, perhaps, their greatest weakness and imposed definite limits on their offensive strength. In the wooded regions of central and northern Russia, the Red Army was a strong defensive force, and, as the Yelnya and Yartsevo victories had shown, it could also carry out offensive operations of limited scope. But we had seen nothing to indicate that it could execute a sustained offensive with rapid and deep tank thrusts and encircling movements like those the Germans had carried out in Poland, France, White Russia, and the Ukraine.

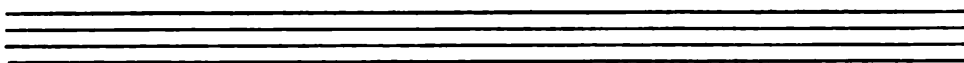
Our guides gave us a tremendous farewell dinner — caviar, hors d'oeuvres, ham, and *chachlik*, or lamb grilled on a spit, with vodka, Soviet champagne, and Caucasian wines. One of the American correspondents challenged a Russian to a drinking bout, and I turned my eyes away in horror — anyone who

thinks he can out-drink a Russian is inviting seven days of multiple hangover. The toasts went round — to Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt, to the three democracies, to the peoples of the three countries. Tongues were loosened and speeches were made in Russian and English and a mixture of both. Finally Vernon Bartlett and I gave the *coup de grâce* to the party by singing for the benefit of our Russian hosts the saddest of English folk songs:

Looking for ale, boys,  
Looking for ale.  
Sometimes we find it,  
Often we fail.  
When the bar closes,  
Look at our noses,  
Red as red roses —  
Looking for ale!

# I3

## CAVIAR TO THE GENERALS



### 1

THROUGH the mists of the Arctic came the statesmen with their generals and admirals to attend the Caviar Conference. That was not its official name, of course, but no one ever gave it another, and as it opened with mountains of caviar and closed with mountains of caviar, with plenty of caviar in between, it could hardly be called anything else.

Actually, the conference had a very serious purpose. At the beginning of the German invasion, Britain and the United States had promised to aid the Soviets. Three months had passed and only small quantities of war material had reached the Soviet Union. Now the three powers were to work out a long-term program for the delivery of supplies. The fact that in spite of the suspicions which persisted between them they

were able to reach an agreement in three days showed that the two capitalist democracies and the socialist state could co-operate when they had an interest in common.

The head of the British delegation was the Minister of Supply, Lord Beaverbrook, one of Britain's leading opponents of communism before the war. The American delegation was led by William Averell Harriman, the representative of the lease-lend organization in London, and a capitalist who had been interested in a Russian manganese concession in the days when the Soviets allowed foreign capital to return for a brief stay. With their generals and admirals they arrived at Archangel on a British cruiser, while the other members of the American delegation flew direct to Moscow from Scotland in four-engined bombers.

At Archangel Beaverbrook and his party entered a Russian-built Douglas plane and set off for Moscow. They had not gone very far when a Russian anti-aircraft battery opened fire on them. The pilot made a steep dive and leveled off just above the trees where the anti-aircraft guns could not reach him. 'I thought they would fire at me on the way out,' casually remarked the Beaver.

The Conference opened on Monday, September 29, at Spiridonovka Palace, which had been the official residence of Maxim Litvinov when he was Commissar for Foreign Affairs. After one of those overpowering Russian lunches, the delegates divided into six committees in which the Russian representatives stated what they needed and the American and British representatives outlined what they could deliver. After these committee meetings, Foreign Commissar Molotov, who presided over the conference, and Beaverbrook and Harriman met Stalin at the Kremlin. Until long after midnight they worked over the committee's reports, drawing up an agreement on the quantities of planes, tanks, munitions, food, raw

materials, and medical supplies which Britain and America would send to the Soviet Union and the materials which the Soviets would deliver to Britain and the United States.

In all the discussions the British and American delegates found out almost nothing about Soviet production, the Soviets' available stocks, and Soviet war plans. The British and American correspondents in Moscow learned even less. And the British and American peoples, who had to pay the bills, learned nothing at all. The British, who were allies of the Russians, tried harder than the Americans to obtain some of the information which allies are supposed to share. The Russians gave them caviar. They had distrusted the capitalist powers for so many years that they could not suddenly relax and tell them their military secrets. And they continued to fear that fascist sympathizers in British and American government departments might allow information to leak out in the press or transmit it to the Germans in other ways.

On the day the conference opened, Beaverbrook handed a stack of ruble notes to a secretary and said, 'Get twenty-five pounds of caviar for Churchill and a jar of strawberry jam for me.' Philip Jordan of the London *News-Chronicle* and I heard of this and sent a little story about it. The next day the Beaver was in disgrace. It seems that Churchill had propped himself up in bed on Tuesday morning and picked up his newspapers. The first thing to catch his eye was a headline, 'Churchill Gets Caviar from Moscow.' The Prime Minister, we may suppose, emitted a cry of surprise and indignation which soon went half-way round the world. Here were the British people living on war rations and he was having caviar! His politician's instinct told him that this was bad. Without delay, he therefore sent off a message to Moscow couched in vigorous Churchillian phrases. The Beaver was a very sad man for a day or two.

## 2

At four o'clock on Wednesday morning, John Russell of the British Embassy rang our doorbell. A complete agreement had just been reached at the Kremlin, and Beaverbrook and Harriman wanted a copy of the Atlantic Charter to quote in their final statement to the conference in the afternoon. Neither the British nor American Embassy could produce the charter, but Shapiro had it in his files. It did not do much good. Beaverbrook and Harriman misquoted the document so thoroughly in their joint statement that its authors could not have recognized it.

What mattered, however, was that the conference had drawn up a schedule of deliveries which helped to strengthen Russian resistance and remove some of the suspicions of the three powers. Beaverbrook summed it all up at his press conference.

'The Russians are very pleased with Lord Beaverbrook,' he said, and his mischievous eyes twinkled.

'Is that off the record?' asked a correspondent.

'No,' snapped the Beaver.

The formal closing of the conference was marked by a banquet such as the Kremlin had never seen before. From six in the evening until one-thirty the next morning, Joseph Ilarionovitch Stalin was host to a hundred or more diplomats, soldiers, and sailors from the United States and Great Britain. Under the blazing crystal chandeliers of the richly brocaded banquet-hall swarmed the marshals, the generals and admirals, and the officers of lesser rank, all weighted down with their medals and medal ribbons. But the person who stood out of the throng was a little man in a semi-military costume — gray tunic and gray trousers tucked into the kind of boots worn by a private in the Red Army. Foreigners in Moscow called him

'Uncle Joe,' and he ran his party that night just like anyone's Uncle Joe.

Stalin did not seem very much interested in the generals and admirals. He just wandered around until he saw a face which interested him, then stopped and talked. In this way he chanced upon Lieutenant 'Ole' Olsen, one of the promising young officers in the American delegation. The old man looked at the regimental insignia on Olsen's uniform, his eyes twinkled, and he said:

'You look very young to be a marshal. In the Red Army, you know, a star like that stands for a marshal.'

The banquet began. In conformity with Russian custom, there were many toasts — some of the guests said thirty-one, others thirty-seven, and the confusion is understandable because Russians drink their toasts to the bottom of the glass. Most of the guests drank vodka and champagne. Stalin drank nothing but the red wine of his native Georgia and placed his inverted glass over the top of the bottle after every toast. Someone offered a toast to Major Al Harvey and Lieutenant Lou Reichers, the American army flyers who had piloted the two big bombers in which most of the American representatives flew to Moscow. Stalin expressed a wish to make their acquaintance, and when they rose from their places at a side table, he also arose and walked halfway to meet them and shook hands.

Of all the toasts — whether thirty-one or thirty-seven — one remained in the memories of the guests. Standing at the center of the speakers' table, Stalin raised his glass to President Roosevelt.

'May God help him in his task,' he said in Russian.

Constantine Oumansky, the Soviet Ambassador to the United States, translated the words into English. Some of the American and British representatives looked surprised and

asked their Russian neighbors whether Oumansky's translation was correct. The Russians assured them that it was. This left them more surprised than before. Stalin was educated for the Orthodox priesthood and he frequently lapses into Biblical or religious phraseology, even more frequently than Lenin, who also knew the Bible. But this, as we learned later, was no slip of the tongue.

After the banquet, Stalin led his guests out of the hall. Many of them remarked how short he was, perhaps only a little more than five feet, six inches in height. His hair was gray and beginning to turn white, and his complexion rather sallow.

In the corridor, the Soviet leader turned round and said: 'The lavatory is on the left.'

Oumansky rendered a faithful translation.

The guests found that the plumbing was English. So were Uncle Joe's parting words:

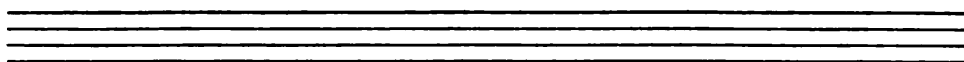
'Good night.'

This was an unknown Stalin — Stalin the genial host. In those few hours under the crystal chandeliers, the guests had no opportunity to become acquainted with the deeper Stalin — the Stalin who had strode defiantly between the two lines of the Czar's soldiers while their rifle butts beat a tattoo on his head and shoulders; the Stalin who had patiently outmaneuvered the talented Trotsky; the Stalin who had pushed through industrialization and collectivization regardless of the immediate cost in human suffering; the Stalin who had amazed foreign scholars by his knowledge of literature and history; the Stalin who had always beaten his enemies to the draw until dawn of the morning of June 22, 1941.



# I4

## THE GODLESS GRANT AN ARMISTICE



### 1

WHY did Stalin invoke God's blessing on President Roosevelt? At that moment, religious leaders and a number of politicians in America were protesting against the delivery of war supplies to Godless Russia. In replying to their protests, the President had said that the Soviet Constitution guarantees freedom of religion. This had provoked a new storm of protests, and Roosevelt had sent a message to Stalin through Harriman pointing out the importance which the American government and people attach to religious freedom. Stalin privately assured Harriman that everything would be all right. His toast was probably another assurance that the President would not be embarrassed by any anti-religious activity in the Soviet Union.

As a matter of fact, the war on religion had been suspended when the war against Hitler began. On that Sunday morning of June 22, the Metropolitan Sergei, Acting Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, called upon all believers to throw themselves into the fight against Hitlerism. A few weeks later, the *Bezbozhnik*, the leading publication of the Society of the Godless, formally declared an armistice in the war on the Church. 'If the servants of the Church honestly call upon religious believers to fight against fascism, we must not belittle this fact,' it told the Godless militants. 'We must now work harder than ever among the believers to show them how the Hitlerites suppress freedom of conscience and how the Nazis persecute the Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox clergy in Germany and the occupied countries.' The *Bezbozhnik* then ceased publication, 'in order to conserve paper,' and the anti-religious museums in Moscow were closed.

On the Saturday after the Kremlin banquet I went to Yelokhovo Cathedral to see how religious worship was conducted in the Soviet Union. Alexei, my driver, told me that the principal service of the Orthodox Church was held on Saturday afternoon. He could not remember when he himself had last gone to church, and he remained at a discreet distance when I entered the cathedral.

It was like stepping back into the past. I had met only one beggar on the streets of Moscow, but here in the porch of the cathedral I found all the representatives of that ancient profession which is not without honor in the East. Old beggars, young beggars, the lame, and the blind were there, wrapped in their rags and tatters, and holding out their tin cups and scrawny hands to the passing faithful. On the floor sat a young mother nursing a baby and looking at those who passed with suppliant eyes.

From the interior came the voices of the choir intoning the

beautiful ritual of the Orthodox Church. The splendor of the cathedral was almost overpowering at first — it was in such startling contrast to the beggars at the door and to the drab worshipers inside. On the walls, jeweled ikons in golden frames sent back the rays of a thousand candles and tapers which burned everywhere in massive golden candelabra and chandeliers. In a cope of cloth-of-gold, a white-bearded prelate with a fine ascetic face passed among the congregation carrying a lighted taper in one hand and a censer in the other, pausing at each ikon and swinging the censer before the holy images. In the center of the church was a brass lectern with the Gospels. As the people moved forward into the cathedral, they paused here and crossed themselves or knelt and touched their heads to the floor. Over to the right against a pillar was a painting of the Virgin and the Child, an object of particular veneration. Old women wrapped in gray shawls prostrated themselves before it on the stone floor, then rose and reverently kissed the feet of the Child. All through the ceremony, an old man in the threadbare robe of a monk lay there with his face to the floor.

A tall girl of eighteen or twenty, wearing a red beret, and another, slightly younger, in a bright blue beret, moved through the drab throng toward the altar, and a mother led a boy of six or seven, neatly dressed in a blue raincoat, up to the ikon of a saint. But the rest of the worshipers seemed old, very old, and their honest Russian faces, lighted by the flickering candles and tapers, bore the marks of Russia's struggle through war, revolution, and famine, and of their own personal struggle, too. All around me gray-haired men softly chanted with the choir. A man with a great shock of black hair, his legs bound like a peasant's, and two aged women filed through the crowd carrying trays on which the worshipers placed ruble notes or coins of ten or twenty kopecks. A cat

with bulging sides rubbed against the legs of the faithful.

There was nothing furtive about the ceremony. People came and went as freely as in America. But no ceremony in America could have been so moving. At the steps of the porch, with the beggars behind me, I paused involuntarily for a moment before passing from the Holy Russia of the Czars back to the Russia of the Soviets.

## 2

On a collective farm near Ramenskoe, thirty-five miles to the south of Moscow, I saw another side of the religious picture. In Moscow itself and in the villages around Vyazma and Yelnya, I had seen many disused churches with their gaping roofs and windows. Here, on the hill above this farm, was a pretty white stucco church with five bulb-shaped domes of faded blue. As we walked up the hill, I asked the old peg-legged soldier who was my guide whether it was still in use.

'No,' he replied. 'We held a meeting of all the members of the farm in 1939 and voted to close it.'

'What happened to the priest?'

'He went to Moscow. I think he found another church there. He was very old.'

'But aren't there any people left here who practice religion?'

'No, they aren't interested in religion any more. The young people especially. Near Moscow, I believe, there are still some collective farms which have churches, but all of the churches around here have been closed.'

'How did the question of closing the church arise?'

'It just came up at one of our meetings.'

'Didn't the women object?'

'No, they voted with the men.'

The story of this church is perhaps typical of hundreds of

others. Before the First World War, the Russian and Georgian Orthodox churches alone were said to have one hundred million communicants. In 1939, according to Emelyan Yaroslavsky, President of the League of Militant Godless, there were thirty million believers of all sects. Before the Revolution, Russia had a hundred thousand parishes and religious communities. In 1941, the Soviet government estimated that the Russian Orthodox Church and the Renewed Orthodox Church maintained 4225 churches and 37 monasteries, the Roman Catholics 1744 churches and 2309 chapels, the Moslems 1312 mosques, and the Jews 1011 synagogues. The high proportion of Catholic churches was largely due to the recent annexation of eastern Poland and the Baltic States.

3

Although the world in general became interested in religious freedom in Russia only after the coming of the Soviets, there was no such freedom under the czars. The policy of the czarist governments was summed up in the formula, 'One czar, one religion, one language.' The Orthodox Church was in effect an arm of the State and was used by the State to stamp out religious and political dissent. It ruthlessly persecuted the so-called Old Believers, the Uniate Church, the Lutherans, the Lamaist Kalmucks, and others. Priests with crosses and ikons marched at the head of pogroms to the Jewish quarters.

The Orthodox Church put anathemas and curses on reformers of all kinds. It had an especially thunderous anathema for the Bolsheviks. On January 19, 1918, the Patriarch Tikhon adjured all the faithful to have nothing to do with 'these monsters of the human race.' Four days later the Soviets, who had already nationalized the great estates of the Church, decreed the separation of the Church from the State and

banned religious teaching from the schools. The same decree guaranteed freedom of religious and irreligious belief and propaganda; all religions were put on an equal plane with each other and with atheism.

The churches naturally sided with the Whites in the Civil War, and their position after the Bolshevik triumph became worse and worse. In 1921, the government prohibited the teaching of religion to children under eighteen. Civil rights were denied to priests and all other religious practitioners. Anti-religious propaganda was disseminated throughout the land, though Yaroslavsky frequently complained that the campaign against religion was not being conducted with sufficient vigor. With the growing stability of the country, however, some of the restrictions on religion were relaxed. Parents were allowed to give religious instruction to their children. The Constitution of 1936 restored all civil rights to the priests. The much-discussed Article 124 recognized freedom of religious worship and freedom of anti-religious propaganda.

In order to appreciate the position of the Church under the Constitution, I went to see the Metropolitan Sergei, Acting Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church. Henry Shapiro took me to his home, a little green cottage on a side street near Yelokhovo Cathedral. A small room served the primate as a bedroom and an office. On the side near the window was a cabinet with ikons, crucifixes, and other religious objects. On the other side was a small iron bed, and on the wall above it were a thermometer and a barometer. In the center of the room was a plain mahogany desk with an American portable typewriter fitted with Russian characters. The Patriarch told me that he typed his own letters on it.

He was a robust and hearty man despite his seventy-five years. His long white beard rested on a broad chest. His twinkling eyes, behind his rimless spectacles, suggested a fine

sense of humor, and his answers to my questions showed a statesman's tact. He wore a round rimless hat and an old gray cassock gathered in at the waist by a leather girdle.

I told him that President Roosevelt had been criticized for saying that the Soviet Constitution guarantees freedom of religion.

'The President is right,' said the primate, 'but I should like to point out that the present constitution is not the first to contain this guarantee. Freedom of religion existed even before 1936. The Church takes advantage of this guarantee and every now and then petitions the government for certain concessions. And I can tell you that these concessions are then granted.'

'What kind of concessions, for instance?'

The Patriarch smiled as he replied.

'You have read the *Pickwick Papers*? Well, Mr. Pickwick traveled a great deal around the country and often got into trouble with local authorities who do not always understand changing circumstances and conditions. We sometimes have little difficulties with the local authorities, but whenever that happens I bring the matter to the attention of the central government and it is settled.'

'Can you give an example?'

'Sometimes we have difficulty with local officials on questions of taxation. When they demand too much, we usually go to the higher authorities, and they invariably give us satisfaction. You may already know that there has recently been a big reduction in the rates of taxation on churches.'

I told the Primate that many people in America felt that the constitutional guarantees were insincere if there were restrictions on the education and training of priests. What kind of provision, I asked him, was made for this type of education?

'We have no seminaries or schools,' he replied. 'Fortunately

there are still many servants of religion who were trained before the Revolution, and I am hopeful that we may be able to do something for the future. Of course, priests may still be trained privately and the Church does this.'

Archbishop Sergei of the Moscow archdiocese, who was present, amplified the Primate's statement.

'There is no formal instruction,' he said, 'but a young man who graduates from high school may apply to the Church authorities if he wishes to become a priest. They suggest a program of study and give him the necessary books. When he completes this course, he is examined by a bishop or archbishop, and if he proves satisfactory, he is ordained.'

'But how many youths apply in this way?' I asked the Patriarch.

He shook his head sadly and admitted there were not many.

'Without a regular system of instruction,' he said, 'interest in the priesthood is limited and young men rarely come forward. I have reason to believe, however, that there will be a change in this matter because there already has been a movement away from the extremist attitude toward religion. All movements are inclined to go to extremes at the beginning, but later they take a more reasonable attitude. Even before this war the State was beginning to recognize that religion had a rôle to play. You may have seen, for example, the film which has been made about the life of our Russian saint, Prince Alexander Nevski. In general, there has been a relaxation of the opposition to the Church throughout the Soviet Union.'

I asked whether there were enough priests for all congregations.

'On the whole, yes,' said the Patriarch, 'but every now and then, priests have to travel from one congregation to another to take care of all the faithful.'

'What is the present situation in regard to religious instruction of children?'



'They may be given religious instruction only in the home. Parents who teach their children are not interfered with. You can, of course, see children with their mothers in the churches.'

I pointed out that I had seen very few young people at the cathedral. The Primate replied that there had been an increase in the attendance of young people since the outbreak of the war. He added, however, that the young in all countries seem to prefer the theater and other amusements to church services.

To my surprise, the Patriarch told me that the Church had plenty of money.

'Fortunately the faithful are generous and contribute willingly. Some of our churches have savings accounts of thousands of rubles in the banks. We are even able to make a contribution to the Orthodox churches in America. The Metropolitan of Kiev already has his exit visa from the Soviet government, and as soon as he can obtain an American visa he is going to the United States to inspect the Orthodox churches and help them with their financial difficulties. Yes, we are allowed to send money to America for this purpose.'

'Would it be correct to sum up the situation by saying that the position of the Church is probably better today than in the past?' I asked.

'Yes,' he replied. 'First of all, the position of the Church has improved because people think more of God in these difficult times. Then there has been an improvement in relations with the State. This has been demonstrated by such actions as the reduction of taxes on churches.'

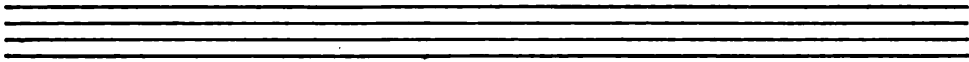
#### 4

What then, in brief, is the present position of the churches and what is their outlook for the future?

On the one hand, freedom of worship — in the strict sense of the term — does exist in Russia; wherever there are enough people to form a congregation, believers may freely worship. There is no active persecution of religion. The anti-religious movement is under eclipse; the duration of this eclipse may be determined by the future relations between the Soviet Union and the western powers. On the other hand, religion is still subjected to a number of handicaps. Children may be given religious instruction only in the home; the scientific instruction they receive in school has an anti-religious twist. Youths who practice religion know that they are barred from the Young Communist League, the Communist Party, and all positions of importance. If the hopes of the Patriarch are disappointed, the Soviet Union will remain without educational establishments for priests. And, whatever divagations may occur in Soviet policy, the leaders will always hold with Marx that 'religion is the opium of the people.'

The great test of religion is therefore coming in the next few decades, and the result will probably be felt by the churches throughout the world. Will the new generations experience an irresistible urge, a divine urge, to return to the faiths of the past? Or will they find satisfaction for their spiritual longings in the doctrine of communism, in the effort to create a new civilization of which unselfishness is the keystone, in good works without faith?

## MOSCOW FACES HITLER



### 1

THE Moscow Conference was hardly closed when Hitler launched his great offensive against the Soviet capital. On October 3 he told his cheering cohorts in Berlin that the supreme moment was at hand. 'Russia is already broken and will never rise again,' he boasted. A week later, his press chief, Doctor Otto Dietrich, returned to Berlin from the Russian front and announced that sixty or seventy Russian divisions had been trapped at Vyazma and Briansk. 'With the annihilation of these armies,' he said, 'the campaign in the east is decided. For all military purposes Soviet Russia is done with.'

The Germans had reason to feel confident. Every man, every ounce of metal which could be scraped together had

been put at the disposal of Field Marshal Fedor von Bock. French, Czech, and Italian tanks rode with his armored forces. The weight of his artillery salvo was increased by guns from Belgium, Holland, Rumania, and Hungary. It was the sternest test the Soviets had faced. Moscow had to be held; it was not only a symbol but the hub of the Soviet railway system. If the Soviets lost the capital, they would probably have to retreat to the Volga, along whose eastern bank ran only one railroad, a very doubtful line of supply for a great army. And yet in defending the capital and communications center, the Soviets risked the loss of their army, and of the war. It was characteristic of the Bolsheviks that they played for all or nothing, and won. They saved the capital and kept their army.

Each day in the first two weeks of October we could feel the war drawing closer to Moscow. There were more soldiers in the streets, more military trucks rolling out of the city onto the Smolensk road. Through the Red Square and down Gorky Street marched the labor battalions — men and women with spades on their shoulders, going out to dig trenches and anti-tank ditches on the rolling fields to the west. Two hundred thousand men and women were said to be at work on the fortifications of the capital. Compulsory military training was decreed for men and boys who were not of military age. Army officers began to train workers in the factories and boys in the high schools to build barricades in the streets, throw grenades and benzine bottles at tanks, and fight behind barricades and buildings. Exhortations to the troops and people became more stern and intense. Over the loudspeaker system came the voice of the Leningrad workers: 'The fascist aggressors will never see the streets of our city.' And the voice of the Moscow proletariat replying: 'The fascist barbarians will never pollute our capital. Moscow is, was, and shall be Soviet.'

Strange rumors ran through the city. The O.G.G., or

underground information service, was working overtime. On Saturday, October 11, everyone heard that the Germans had dropped leaflets warning the people of Moscow that unless they surrendered immediately the capital would be devastated like Belgrade. No one had seen the leaflets, of course. On the same day it was rumored that German parachutists had been dropped at Mozhaisk, sixty miles west of Moscow. This had some foundation. The German parachute divisions had been reorganized after the capture of Crete in the spring and were now being used behind the Russian lines to spread terror and confusion. I quickly ran down one authentic case and heard of others later. Six workers from a film studio had gone to the Kaluga sector southwest of Moscow to dig fortifications. German parachutists set fire to the house in which they were sleeping and all were burned to death.

The activities of the parachutists aroused more indignation than the Germans realized, and it was not all directed against themselves. Every Russian knew that the Red Army had been the first to train parachutists and that Russian parachute formations had been shown to foreign experts at the 1936 maneuvers. While the housewives stood in line to get their rations, they shook their heads over this mistake. Why, they asked, did we have to show the Germans the parachute trick? They could have found out for themselves. Someone should be held to account.

As the Germans drew nearer, anger also began to rise against the British. What were they waiting for? Why didn't they attack the Continent? What kind of allies were they? On October 11, the Red Army newspaper, *Red Star*, demanded that the British strike at Hitler in the west to relieve the pressure on Moscow.

A great city threatened by a foe is a complex and wonderful thing. Moscow in October was like London under the blitz,

like Madrid when the enemy was just across the Manzanares. On the surface, in spite of a few changes, the same calm; beneath the surface the fears and anxieties of people facing the unknown. In the morning the housewives gathered around the corner stalls where cabbages and potatoes were sold. Workers poured in and out of the subway or lined up for the trolley-buses. At noon everyone paused to hear the communiqué from the front. Little groups gathered under the loudspeakers at street corners and in the squares. Across the street from the bare girders of the Palace of the Soviets the buxom middle-aged woman who sold gladioli and pink and white asters came out of her little green kiosk to listen. The traffic policeman in the long blue military coat moved from his post toward the loudspeaker. In the afternoon the children came home from school, healthy boisterous children with their books under their arms. In the evening the apparently carefree throngs still poured out of the Operetta Theater humming the tunes of *Rose Marie*. Then night settled down and the unlighted streets were deserted.

So long as a city can keep its surface calm, so long as it can keep life moving in the normal way, it will not be an easy conquest. So long as the housewife goes to the corner store, so long as the driver goes to his bus and the buses take the workers to their factories, so long as the comedian goes on with the show, the city will stand. But let the fears and anxieties rise above the surface, the housewife fail in her daily tasks, the driver desert his bus, the workers stay absent from their lathes, and the city will fall. No prodigies of valor by its defenders will compensate for the disintegration of the collective will.

## 2

The offensive against Moscow was a hard story to cover. We were not allowed to go to the front. The communiqués

became more terse; authentic news grew scarcer than ever. Often we received our first hint of what was happening from the London radio. But even the British Broadcasting Corporation was misled by German propaganda into making exaggerated statements which added to the general confusion.

I found myself among the few in the foreign colony who believed that Moscow would be held. My belief was founded on those intangible fundamentals which a reporter must fall back on when facts are scarce. The Germans were two hundred and twenty-five miles from Moscow at the nearest point when they launched their offensive. To cover two hundred and twenty-five miles in a single bound would be a formidable operation under the best of circumstances. And they were attempting to carry out this operation at the end of a long and tenuous line of communications. Each mile in their advance would increase the strain on their communications system. And it was reasonable to suppose that each mile would bring a stiffening of the Soviet resistance. It was only a few weeks since I had seen the army which was facing Hitler. Its officers and men were excellent, its morale high. Although it was short of tanks, it had plenty of fighter planes, guns, and other weapons for a defensive battle. It would not easily be broken.

This was the physical side. What of the moral, which Napoleon said is three times as important? I talked to diplomats who had been in touch with some of the Soviet leaders, and I found that even the most pessimistic among them were convinced that the government would fight to the bitter end to hold the capital. I talked to everyone I knew about the spirit of the people. They were undoubtedly anxious and uneasy. I heard of a few who wanted to run away and save their own skins. But I heard of many more who were volunteering to march out and dig fortifications. And I never heard of a Russian who wanted to quit. What was more, government and

people were united in their purpose. The government was giving the masses rifles, grenades, benzine cocktails, teaching them to build barricades, teaching them how to fight in the streets. The outside world had been prone to believe that the Soviet régime rested only on terror and coercion. But now, in the moment of trial, the government was putting into the hands of the people all the weapons which are used in insurrection and civil war and instructing them in their use. No other government, even in this total war, had dared put such confidence in its people.

What little information Shapiro and I could gather about the actual struggle indicated that the Red Army was fighting well. The activity of the Red Air Force was a reassuring factor. A friend of mine had been able to talk to a number of officers and men from different sectors of the central front, and they all agreed that the air force was helping to break up the tank attacks, giving constant support to the men on the ground. If hard-pressed infantrymen had a word of praise for the air force, it must be doing well indeed. And if the Germans could not knock the Soviets out of the air, they would have a hard time routing them on the ground.

Each night I put against this background the few facts which could be gleaned from the newspapers and other sources and sent my story to New York. I emphasized that contrary to the bombastic German claims the Red Army on the central front was still intact and fighting well. German propaganda, however, had won the battle on the news front. My few words of reason from Moscow were lost in the din coming from the German Ministry of Propaganda.

Although Shapiro and I felt reasonably sure that Moscow would not fall, we began to make preparations to leave if the government gave the order. The United States Ambassador, Laurence Steinhardt, also worked out plans with his staff for



the evacuation of the American colony, which comprised only the Embassy staff, the military missions, the newspaper correspondents, and one or two others. The palatial residence of the Ambassador was always open to the press, and the correspondents gathered there in the evenings to coordinate their plans with his.

On the night of October 10, Llewellyn E. Thompson, the efficient second secretary of the Embassy, called all of us to the Ambassador's residence to review our preparations. He promised that if we left Moscow by car, the Embassy would fill our gas tanks and give us a container with another hundred liters of gasoline. If we left by train, the Embassy staff would bring enough food to carry all of us through a few days or a week.

The next morning, after going through the gloomy newspapers with John Evans, I strolled down to Gorky Street. The weather had suddenly turned cold and many Muscovites had put on their sugar-loaf Astrakhan hats. It was less than six weeks since I had been surprised by the well-stocked counters of the commercial stores. Now they were a depressing sight. There was a line a hundred yards long outside the bakery which had displayed every variety of bread and rolls in September, but now it could offer nothing but the staple kinds of bread, and it looked as if the last people in line might get nothing. The other food shops were still crowded, but there were only a few cans of fish or vegetables on their counters.

That afternoon Lozovsky had nothing to offer at his press conference, though he did deny a German report that the government had left Moscow. 'Hitler will see Moscow when he can see his own ears,' he said confidently. That night the communiqué admitted that the Germans had broken through the defenses in the neighborhood of Vyazma, about one hundred and thirty-five miles west of the capital.

The next day, Sunday, October 12, the weather was almost

wintry. The government had decreed that the heat was not to be turned on in apartments until October 15. I worked in the office all morning, but it grew so cold in the afternoon that I could no longer type. I put on my overcoat and went out to the Park of Culture and Rest to see what the proletariat was doing. The park was not crowded, but the parachute jump was doing its usual thriving business. A middle-aged woman came sailing down from the tower, landed easily, and hurried back into line for another jump. Soldiers and other young men followed her at the rate of one a minute. There were many troops in the crowd, some of them, with their muddy coats and boots, looking as if they had just come from the front. In spite of the cold, they were all buying ice-cream sandwiches or cartons of ice cream with paper spoons.

That night the communiqué admitted that the Germans had captured Briansk, the important communications center two hundred and twenty-five miles southwest of Moscow.

The next morning I met some white-collar workers who had just come back to Moscow after two weeks with the labor battalions. They had worked fourteen hours a day on anti-tank ditches and were in a state of collapse. In the afternoon Meyer Handler of our London staff arrived to become Shapiro's permanent assistant. He had traveled through the Arctic in a convoy and flown down from Archangel. His first task was to send the midnight communiqué which announced that the Russians had evacuated Vyazma.

The next day, Tuesday, October 14, the apartment was almost unbearably cold. The morning papers said that the German offensive was slowing down, but later in the day we gathered information to the contrary. Von Bock's forces were apparently near Mozhaïsk, only sixty miles west of Moscow. Shapiro heard that they had also reached Kalinin, one hundred miles to the northwest of the capital, and Kaluga, one

hundred miles to the southwest. The Red Army was still fighting bravely but it was threatened by a gigantic pincers. In spite of our earlier conviction that Moscow would not fall, Shapiro and I began to feel that we would soon be leaving the capital.

That night after dinner, Shapiro, Handler, and I gathered around the radio to hear the news from London. The apartment seemed much warmer. I touched the radiator and discovered that the heat was on. I had hardly let out a cheer when an explosion shook the building and a cold draft blew through the room. I went to my bedroom and found that the window had been blown in by a bomb. We were worse off than ever.

When I came out of the bedroom, Jennie, the cook, was crying nervously in the hall. She ran away during the night and we never saw her again.

Thursday, October 15, was clear and cold. The anti-aircraft guns had roared all through the night, and we learned that the Germans had been heavily bombing the Smolensk road to halt the flow of reinforcements and supplies toward Mozhaisk. John Evans came late to the office and said that his Russian wife had gone off with a labor battalion to dig trenches west of Moscow. The papers were full of gloom. The *Red Star* struck an ominous note: soldiers who were cut off, it said, must not throw away their weapons but fight on.

At one-thirty in the afternoon all the correspondents were called to the American Embassy and told that the Diplomatic Corps and the press would leave Moscow that night.

## 3

Steinhardt and Sir Stafford Cripps had been called to the Kremlin at noon and told by Viacheslav Molotov, the Vice-

Premier and Foreign Commissar, that the Diplomatic Corps, the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, and some of the other government departments would leave for Kuibyshev that night. Moscow would be defended to the last, he said, and Stalin, as head of the five-man Committee of Defense, would stay in the capital. Molotov himself would remain a few days as a member of the committee and go to Kuibyshev at the end of the week.

After receiving the news from Steinhardt, Shapiro and I hurried back to the apartment to pack. That was easy for me but hard for Shapiro. We filled three or four suitcases with his suits, sweaters, warm socks, and underwear, and put cans of sardines and condensed milk and boxes of paper clips and other office supplies in the odd corners. I took down from the wall the fine woodcuts by Kravchenko, cut them out of their frames, and put them in a briefcase with a few reference books and a box of American chocolate bars. We stuffed our pockets with cigarettes and rolled up several cartons together with toothpaste and shaving cream in three bundles of blankets and sheets. While we packed we could hear Nina, the maid, sobbing in her room. As a Soviet citizen she could not come on our train, which was reserved for foreigners. Oscar Emma and the two drivers also had to stay behind. John Evans, who could have come with us, was staying until his wife returned from her work with the labor battalions.

At five o'clock the faithful Sergei and Alexei drove Shapiro, Handler, and me to the Embassy. Snow was falling in big soft flakes, and the pavement was already white. On every street, men and women were hurrying along with bundles over their shoulders. As we turned a corner, we almost ran down a young woman carrying a baby wrapped in a light blue blanket. In front of a big apartment house, a man and woman were jamming a mattress into the back of a car.

We passed the derelict church with the five tarnished domes and swung into the driveway of Spasso House, the Ambassador's residence. In the great reception hall with its Ionic columns some of the thirty-two Americans who were going to Kuibyshev were already waiting. With the Ambassador were Walter Thurston, the capable and quiet Counselor of the Embassy; Colonel Ivan Yeaton, the affable, rough and ready military attaché; Colonel Philip R. Faymonville, the former military attaché and present head of the American supply mission; and Commander Allen, the naval attaché, who had worked in Kuibyshev for the American Relief Administration after the First World War.

I went through the hall to the room of Tommy Thompson for a farewell drink. He was being left in charge of the Embassy and would stay in Moscow no matter what happened. During four years in Geneva, we had been the closest friends, working together in the League corridors during the sessions and spending our holidays skiing over the mountain trails of Switzerland, France, and Austria. He took his unenviable assignment lightly enough. Frederick Reinhardt, the third secretary, was staying with him.

At seven o'clock we had a buffet dinner which was much too good for refugees — caviar, cold ham, tongue and salad, and plenty of Milwaukee and St. Louis beer. By eight o'clock our baggage had been ticketed and sent off to the station in a truck. We gathered in the hall and Major Joseph Michela, the assistant military attaché, sent us off with military precision. He put me in a car with Charlie Thayer, one of the second secretaries of the Embassy and the man in charge of our food supplies.

It was a black night. The snow flew before our dimmed headlights. We drove quietly through the dark streets and turned into the B Circle, one of the broadest thoroughfares in

Moscow. Army trucks loaded with troops, guns, and munitions were going in the opposite direction, rolling steadily along ten yards apart. Then came tractors drawing guns covered with pine branches. At each corner our headlights picked out the lines of working men and women waiting for the trolley buses to take them home.

We sped along, overtaking truckloads of refugees going in our direction — women in shawls huddled on piles of bedding on the backs of trucks. Army cars, with their blue headlights tinting the snow, sped past on the other side of the street. The dark sky trembled as the trolleys on snow-covered wires sent green flashes into the night. In the center of the street marched a column of troops, their bayonets gleaming blue in the dark. A little farther on, troops and civilians were trying to disentangle a tank and a car which had crashed. We slowed down at an intersection and our headlights struck the spades of a labor battalion marching toward us. Down the center of the street they came, sturdy men, women wrapped in shawls, marching with a long slow tread — and singing!

The traffic became so dense as we approached the large hulk of the Kazan Station that Thayer and I jumped out and ran the last hundred yards through the snow. We entered a steaming waiting-room and went in opposite directions in search of our party. I wandered into a dimly lighted buffet where soldiers who had just come in from the east were sleeping on the bare floor, packed tightly together with their rifles between them. Along the walls women were sitting on their bundles, many of them holding sleepy babies. I went into the next room where a long line was waiting at a ticket office. The only light came from a blue bulb in the high ceiling. Soldiers with white duffel bags on their shoulders kept emerging from the darkness at the far end, passing under the blue light, and out into the darkness at the other end.

A blue-coated policeman with a rifle slung over his shoulder came up to me and said:

‘You are with the American Embassy?’

‘Yes.’

‘Follow me.’

We went through a big waiting-room lighted only by a few dim bulbs. On all sides were women with their children. Sturdy peasant women were sleeping on the floor with their bundles as pillows. Tired mothers were sitting on the benches nursing their babies. The cries of tired children came from the dim corners.

At the far end we stepped into another world. The station restaurant was brightly lighted, or so it seemed after the darkened rooms. It was a masterpiece of the baroque, a vast hall with ornate woodwork and florid paintings of prancing nymphs and goddesses on the walls and vaulted ceiling. Here the foreign colony was gathered — diplomats in sugar-loaf hats and fur coats, British army officers with the scarlet band of the general staff on their khaki caps, British naval officers in blue greatcoats and gold braid, R.A.F. officers in blue-gray, Poles and Czechs in dark khaki. The scene had the unreal quality of ballet or grand opera; if everyone had started to sing in Italian, it would hardly have been surprising.

Sir Stafford Cripps strolled in with the Airedale which was his inseparable companion. Even with his Astrakhan hat he looked the perfect English country gentleman. General Tatekawa, the Japanese Ambassador, marched in at the head of the Japanese contingent, which included a little boy in a red knitted suit. My friends from the *Llanstephan Castle* turned up one at a time — Bomba Lovell, Major Philipson, the Czechs and the Poles, everyone except Vernon Bartlett, who had returned to England with Lord Beaverbrook.

I remembered that I had left my haversack in the car and

went out to see if it had turned up. All the baggage from the American Embassy had been put in a little room alongside the restaurant. I was leaning over, looking behind a row of trunks, when I heard a woman's voice say:

'So you're leaving us.'

I turned around and saw the young woman whom I had met the night before I left for the front. She was exceptionally well dressed for a Russian woman, in a coat and hat of Persian lamb.

'So you're leaving us,' she repeated.

'Yes,' I said, 'by request.'

'I know,' she smiled. 'I have come down to say good-bye to some friends who are also leaving — by request. Where are you going?'

'To Kuibyshev. And then to the Far East and America.'

'You're lucky. Is your family in America?'

'Yes, my wife is there now. And I have a little daughter whom I have never seen.'

'Then you are lucky.'

'And what about your baby?' I asked.

She shrugged her shoulders.

'I have no news,' she replied. 'She was in the Ukraine with my mother. The Germans are there now.'

'And your husband?'

She turned her head away. After a while she answered:

'He is dead.'

She walked a few steps, then came back.

'One night,' she said, 'I woke up very suddenly. It was about three o'clock. I got up and went to the window and looked out at the stars. And then I knew that a man had died. That man was my husband.'

I tried to reason with her, but she would not listen.

'You men do not understand these things,' she said. 'No-



thing that could happen now could make me feel any more certain. I shall never see him again.'

She paused and we were silent for a while. Then she went on.

'He was in a tank battalion. I heard something about his battalion from another officer. They were ordered to attack a German tank division — a whole division. It was commanded by a famous general — Guderian, I think. None of them came back, or very few.'

It was almost midnight. For a moment I heard the distant rumble of anti-aircraft guns.

'Do you know what I should like to do tonight?' she asked suddenly. 'I should like to shake hands with a murderer. I should like to say to him: "You, at least, are decent. You have killed only one man. The world is being ruled by men who have killed millions." Yes, it is the heads of governments who have killed millions. It is they who have done all this — the Hitlers, the Mussolinis, the Chamberlains.'

She stopped and was silent for a few minutes. Then she asked:

'Do you remember what I told you about the Russian people?'

'Yes,' I said. 'I think you were right. I want to come back and see more of them.'

'Good-bye,' she said.

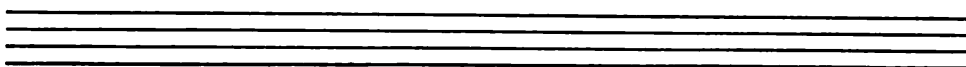
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In the restaurant I rejoined Henry Shapiro, who told me that he and I had drawn places in a 'hard' car. Classes having been abolished in the Soviet Union, the railways do not have first, second, and third class compartments like other European countries. They do, however, have hard, soft, and de

luxé cars. This works out just the same, at least so far as the bourgeois traveler is concerned. Most of the Americans were traveling in a 'soft' car, and the Ambassador in a de luxe compartment.

It was twelve-thirty when we filed out of the restaurant onto the slushy unlighted platform. We found our compartment and then went back to find our baggage, which was being unloaded at the soft car. It took half an hour to get together our suitcases, portable typewriters, and bedding. Then we went back and sat on our wooden benches in the darkness, watching the flashes of the guns against the sky. At one-thirty the train moved slowly out of Moscow.

## THE KUIBYSHEV KOMET



## 1

A PLANE dived out of the gray clouds and roared down low over the train. Quentin Reynolds of *Collier's* leaned out of an upper berth and asked in a loud and innocent voice:

'What does that black cross mean on the wings of that plane?'

A dozen faces popped out of other compartments.

'What cross? Where?'

The Russian soldier leaning on his rifle at the end of the corridor grinned and pointed to the plane, which had dived so low that the red star on its wings could be seen for a moment.

'It's ours,' he said.

Reynolds, looking very much pleased with the success of his little joke, drew in his head and went back to sleep.

After a night in the unheated hard car, Shapiro and I had been promoted to comfortable quarters in the soft car. We were luckier than we realized at the moment, because we were to spend four and a half days on the six-hundred-and-eighty-

eight-mile trip to Kuibyshev, which normally took a little over a day. This startling average speed of seven miles an hour earned for our train the name of the 'Kuibyshev Komet.'

At noon we halted at Ryazan, only a hundred miles southeast of Moscow. Here we were not much farther from the front than in the capital, as the Germans had swung south of Moscow and were threatening Tula, about eighty-five miles southwest of Ryazan. The German Air Force had already been paying its respects to this stretch of the railroad. Earlier in the morning we had passed a heavily bombed village and now, on a siding, we saw a line of passenger cars which had been blasted by aerial bombs and riddled by shrapnel and machine-gun bullets.

We waited in the station for several hours. A trainload of field guns, army trucks, and timber came in from the southeast and went on toward Moscow. Late in the afternoon, we moved forward again, but halted after an hour on a siding at a small village. In a little while a trainload of heavy machinery from Moscow factories pulled into the station and went on ahead of us. In another hour a train of flatcars and boxcars filled with men and women followed the first. They were presumably the workers who manned the machines; it was a principle of the evacuation that workers should not be separated from the machinery they operated.

This went on for four days. We waited on sidings while trainloads of tanks and guns went toward the front and while trains loaded with machinery and workers went ahead of us to the new factories in the Urals. There were some on our train who damned 'Russian inefficiency' which kept important people like us waiting while other trains were given priority. The bitter truth was that our train carrying diplomats and newspapermen of twenty nations and a hundred Russian officials as well was the least important train on the line.

Some governments might have pushed us through in record time as a matter of prestige — Fascist countries had won plenty of prestige before the war by making tourist trains run on time. The realistic Russians, however, did not care whether we reached Kuibyshev in one day or ten. What they wanted was to get those arms to the front and get the new factories operating as soon as possible.

The Kuibyshev Komet had no diner. It was lucky for the American colony that Ambassador Steinhardt, Charlie Thayer, and the other members of the Embassy staff had brought a big consignment of canned food from the Embassy commissary. Thayer and Douglas Brown, a well-known American economist and a member of the American supply mission, doled it out to us morning, noon, and night with the help of the Embassy's three Russian servants, who also picked up roasted geese, eggs, bread, butter, and watermelon from the peasants at wayside stations. We had canned grapefruit or canned tomatoes with real American coffee for breakfast, a cup of soup, bread, butter, and jam for dinner and supper, and on one or two occasions goose and hard-boiled eggs. Others on the train were not so fortunate. The Russians, of course, knew the customs of their country and had brought plenty of food with them, but the foreigners had to get out and forage at the stations.

## 2

Among the Americans on the train was Hub Zemke, whom I had left in Archangel, and with him was another young army pilot, Lieutenant Johnny Alison of Gainesville, Florida. For more than a month they had been working at an airdrome north of the Arctic Circle, teaching the Russians to assemble and fly Curtiss P-40 fighters. I had already heard their story

from American and other officers in Moscow — how many times they had escaped death in the newly assembled planes, and how the Russian engineers had conquered all difficulties with the magic word, *nichevo*.

A few weeks before Zemke arrived at Archangel, the site chosen for the airdrome was a stretch of dense forest and peat bog. A foreign officer who saw it told the Russians that it was impossible to build an airdrome there. The Russians just laughed and said '*Nichevo*.' That may mean anything in Russian, but in this case it meant, 'It's nothing,' or 'It doesn't matter.' A thousand army pioneers and two thousand laborers, including many convicts, were put on the job. Within three weeks they had chopped down the trees, removed the stumps, and drained an area several miles square. Then they set to work to build an all-weather runway with the materials at hand. First of all they dug away the peat to a depth of two or three feet on a long stretch a hundred yards wide. Then they laid a foundation of logs like railroad ties. At some spots, where they had been obliged to dig deeper than others, they placed more logs crosswise above the first layer. Finally they laid a solid flooring of six-by-six timbers. When this was finished they had a corduroy runway a mile long and a hundred yards wide which could not be shaken even by the heaviest bomber.

Alison, who had been in Moscow, joined Zemke in the north and they made their quarters in a railroad sleeper. Here they set to work with the Russian technicians, going over the designs of the Curtiss in a mixture of Russian, English, and French, and settling all difficulties with the aid of a technical dictionary and a lot of good-humored gestures. In a surprisingly short time, the Russians had mastered the secrets of the American planes. At the very outset they decided that several gadgets would have to be removed. Zemke and Alison

had not told them that these gadgets had been put on in England and reduced the speed of the plane by fifteen miles an hour.

In America and England the assembly crews used a two-ton crane to lift the fuselage and a one-ton crane to raise the wings. The Russians had only one crane of one-ton capacity, but they just said '*Nichevo*' and went ahead. With the one-ton crane they suspended the fuselage. Then twenty pioneers raised a wing and held it on their backs and shoulders until it was fastened to the fuselage. Sometimes they stood hunched over for half an hour while the wing was being fixed. When the job was done, they just laughed and said '*Nichevo*.'

At the same airdrome, mechanics of the R.A.F. Wing were assembling their Hurricane fighters. They had been handling Hurricanes for years, but the Russians felt chagrined when the first Hurricane was assembled before the first Curtiss. So the Russians redoubled their efforts and succeeded in assembling five Curtiss fighters in one day. That matched the best British effort, and the Russians felt better.

Although Zemke and Alison had warned them not to load the machine-guns before the planes were completely assembled, one Russian went ahead and did it. When the engine was started, the fifty-caliber machine-guns on the engine cowling fired into the propeller. American and British engineers say that you cannot repair a metal propeller. The Russians just pronounced the magic word and the propeller came back from the repair shop as good as new.

The Soviet aviators, ground crews, and pioneers worked fourteen hours or more every day, always enthusiastic, always good-natured, always sure that they would win the war. One evening they gave a 'banquet' for their American friends in a railroad dining-car — a typical Russian banquet with plenty of vodka and monumental quantities of food. Alison, a little

fellow, was not up to the Gargantuan proportions of the meal, and although he never drank, the Russians pressed him for a toast. After some hesitation, the boy from Florida raised his glass to the Soviet mechanics. A big mechanic was so deeply touched that he picked up the little American pilot and gave him the great Russian kiss of friendship, which is a very great kiss indeed. Alison gave no more toasts.

The R.A.F. pilots and mechanics were also swept off their feet by the hospitality, the ingenuity, and the aptitude of the men of the Red Air Force. In spite of the language difficulty, the Soviet ground crews quickly learned their lessons from the British mechanics who taught them to assemble and maintain the Hurricane. After a short course of instruction, one young Russian engineer obtained a mark of 98 out of a possible 100 in a written examination on the maintenance of the Hurricane's engine.

Whenever foreign technicians or officers came into contact with the men of the Red Army and Air Force, they brought back tales like these. Although the average level of efficiency in Russian factories is still well below western standards, the ingenuity, the aptitude of the young Russians for technical training, and, above all, their dauntlessness, invariably impressed the experts from foreign countries.

'These Russians won't be stumped by anything,' an American officer told me after he had seen Red Army engineers carry out a particularly difficult task. 'You know, they have the old pioneering spirit that we Americans used to have.'

That we used to have! That took the wind out of me for a while! Let Americans decide for themselves whether we have lost that spirit, but I can tell them that the younger generation in the Soviet Union definitely has it. If one impression which I brought back from Russia is stronger than another, it is that of the dauntlessness of the younger people, their refusal to be



cowed by difficulties. It is a realization of the tremendous forces of enthusiasm which the Revolution released among the millions who were previously denied all opportunity. With their guns by their sides, always ready to face a foreign enemy, these people have gone forth as pioneers to create vast cities where only nomads roamed before, raise great factories in remote mountains, dam mighty rivers, work with primitive means to open new oil fields and mines. They have blazed new trails through the Arctic, opened regions of their country which were almost unknown to exploration and development. They have impatiently dashed ahead of all other people in an attempt to solve one of the most acute problems of the twentieth century — the problem of property — and although their aims and methods are not ours, their courage and tenacity and their pioneering enterprise cannot be denied. They have left behind them the frontiers of ignorance; in less than two decades, a hundred million people have been taught to read and write. In an age of racial intolerance, they have resolutely put race hatred behind them. While other nations were shirking their race problems, these dauntless men and women have been working out a practical way for one hundred and eighty-nine peoples to live in friendship and equality, and the members of the former master race, the Russians, have gone to the steppes and the mountains, living in tents and rude huts, to teach the backward races to read and write their own languages, to preserve their ancient cultures, to combat the diseases which were decimating their tribes, to run tractors, trucks, and lathes.

Because Russia is still an undeveloped country, this pioneering spirit has half a century or more to run. There are enough problems to be solved, enough obstacles to be overcome, to keep the Soviet people from going soft for many years. If Americans must look for a danger to themselves in the

Soviet Union, here it is, but it is a danger only to an America which allows itself to go soft and which is false to its own pioneering tradition.

## 3

The second day after leaving Moscow we coasted across endless plains on which the snow had almost buried the russet stubble of the harvested grain. Every hour or two we halted on sidings to let long trains of anti-aircraft guns, detectors, armored cars, light tanks, anti-tank guns, and detachments of troops pass us on their way toward Moscow. Every train had two or three rapid-fire anti-aircraft guns or multiple machine-guns as protection against dive-bombers. Much of the material was old and used, but the troops looked cheerful and were warmly clothed.

In the afternoon we were waiting on a siding when a train-load of machinery bearing the mark of the American Tool-works Company of Cincinnati went ahead of us toward the east. The machines had no covering and were rusting under the snow. W. A. Wood, an American armaments engineer, who was standing next to me at the window, shook his gray head. The sight of that rusting machinery hurt him. He was a powerfully built man, six feet two inches in height, and even at the age of seventy-one he was ready to face any of the hardships that Russia had to offer. The Soviet government had employed him for the first time in 1930 as adviser on nonferrous metals. During the following years he had built several big plants at Irkutsk, Tula, and other industrial centers. Then he had worked for the Skoda armament works in Czechoslovakia and for the French and Italian governments. In 1937, when other foreign engineers were being sent away and the official distrust of foreigners was most acute, he had been invited to come back to do a confidential job for the Red Army.

'This country gets you,' he said as we stood at the window looking over the white and russet fields. He paused for a moment and looked at me. I nodded and he went on.

'It gets you. Even Mrs. Wood finds it hard to stay away.'

He puffed quietly on his pipe for a few minutes. Then he continued:

'Russia is still a man's country, but it will be a woman's country some day. The women are charming, industrious, and dependable. If you want to get anything done in Russia, ask a woman to do it.'

That, I discovered, was the opinion of others who knew the Soviet Union. The subject arose quite spontaneously later in the afternoon in the compartment of Air Vice-Marshal Collier of the British mission. A small group of foreigners who had spent some time in Russia agreed that the women of the new generation had more than their share of the pioneering spirit, and that women would play a more and more important rôle in the government and the economic and cultural life of the country.

Collier was one of the brilliant officers who made the R.A.F. a great fighting organization. He had previously been air attaché in Moscow and he knew the country well. On the basis of his knowledge of the country, its people, their army and air force, he was now predicting that the German offensive against Moscow would fail. Another officer who held that view was Colonel Faymonville. He had the reputation of being one of the ablest military attachés ever appointed by the United States and he was, perhaps, the leading American authority on the Red Army.

Another man whose confidence in the Soviets never wavered was Sir Stafford Cripps. At our first meeting in Moscow I had given him a letter of introduction from the American Ambassador in London, John Gilbert Winant, one of the most skill-

ful and self-effacing diplomats ever sent abroad by the United States. Cripps admired Winant and looked forward to the day when he could return to London and collaborate with him on the problems of the war and the future peace. But for the moment Cripps could not be spared from the post of Ambassador to the Soviet Union.

It had not been an easy job for him. Six months before he was appointed Ambassador, he had visited Moscow and been cordially received by Molotov and other Soviet leaders as a friend of the Soviet Union. When he took up his post in June, 1940, however, he found that the atmosphere had changed. As a general rule, the Soviets preferred an ambassador to be representative of the people in power in his country, whatever their political complexion. From Britain they would probably have preferred a Conservative ambassador whose word would carry weight with Churchill and the other Conservatives who dominated the government. Cripps not only did not represent these people — he had even been disowned by the Labor Party. The Soviets, of course, may have been looking for a pretext to be cool to the British Ambassador because at that time they were basing their policy on the Soviet-German pact and trying hard to avoid giving provocation to Hitler. But whatever their motive, they put Cripps in an awkward position. It was a token of his stature that he did not become embittered or lose sight of his objectives. He had been one of the few Englishmen who always realized that Britain might fight on alone to a stalemate, but she could not win the war without the Soviet Union. And in spite of snubs and apparently insurmountable obstacles, he had persevered in his efforts to draw the two countries closer together. With his broad vision and integrity of character, he was a man to whom Britain might well turn in coming years.

## 4

On Saturday night we drew into the railway junction of Penza. Collier, Shapiro, Handler, Bomba Lovell, and I made a dash for the station restaurant, but it seemed that we were too late. The Bolshoi Theater ballet company, which had left Moscow two days before us, had just beaten us to Penza and taken over the restaurant. Shapiro, however, was always full of stratagems. He worked his way into the kitchen and found that there were still five orders of soup. He put his head out the kitchen door and counted our party, which had now grown to eight.

‘Put the five portions in eight plates,’ he said to the waitress.

‘Are you crazy?’ she asked. ‘How can I put five into eight?’

‘It’s easy,’ said Shapiro, ‘just put the soup into eight plates instead of five.’

‘That’s impossible,’ argued the waitress, a thick-set peasant girl. ‘If it were ten plates I could put five portions in them but I can’t do it with eight.’

Shapiro finally took the ladle and served the soup himself. He picked up two plates and was about to walk out of the kitchen when the waitress shouted:

‘Hey, if you customers are going to serve yourselves we’ll all lose our jobs.’

It was excellent soup.

On Sunday we waited eight hours on a siding near the Volga. In a train of boxcars next to ours were several hundred peasants of German descent from the Mariupol district of the southern Ukraine. They had been ordered to go to Siberia and had been on the road sixteen days, living in these boxcars without conveniences of any kind. Men, women, and children slept on the straw-covered floor. They cooked their meals on fires which they built next to the tracks at wayside stops.

At four o'clock in the afternoon we moved on and sighted the Volga, a winding gray stream with broad mudflats. In the twilight, peasant women were going down to the river, each carrying two water buckets on a stick across her shoulders. We crossed the river on a bridge which was at least half a mile long. At the next village we bought watermelons from the peasants and found them refreshing after four days on almost nothing but canned food.

At nine o'clock on Monday morning we arrived at Kuibyshev, by far the largest and most modern community we had seen along the way. Ambassador Steinhardt and his staff went immediately to a modern apartment building where they were to live and work, the British contingent to the headquarters of the Pioneers, or Communist Boy Scouts, and the correspondents to the Grand Hotel on the main street. Shapiro and I made a quick reconnaissance and ascertained that the only bath in the hotel was out of order. So we stuffed some clothes and soap into a bag and hurried off with Handler to the public baths. Every Russian town has its *bahnya* and we looked forward to a good thorough Russian steam bath. Unfortunately, a large part of the local population had the same idea and the steam baths were full. Shapiro, however, slipped into the manager's office and convinced him that we were visitors of distinction. The three of us were assigned to one big bathroom, and felt that we were indeed lucky.

We undressed in a vestibule and went into a big tiled room which had a tub with hot and cold water taps and two extra taps beside it. On a marble bench were three tin basins. We opened the two hot water taps and the room filled with steam. Then we filled our basins and scrubbed ourselves, dousing each other with basins full of cold water at the finish. That night we were the envy of the foreign colony. And the next morning there was a line of ambassadors, ministers, generals, and lesser dignitaries at the *bahnya*.

All in all, everyone settled down to life in Kuibyshev with a minimum of fuss. A day or two after our arrival, Lozovsky, Palgunov, and the censors turned up at the big school building which had been taken over by the Foreign Office, and we resumed our daily battles with them. Although the Grand Hotel was not-so-grand, it had its compensations. Through the lobby and dining-room moved people whom we would rarely, if ever, have seen in Moscow. Maxim Litvinov was there, looking in better health than when I had last seen him in Geneva three years before. From besieged Leningrad came Dmitri Shostakovitch, a nervous ascetic-looking man, absorbed in the creation of his seventh symphony which would celebrate the heroism and sacrifice of the Soviet workers and peasants. Out of the half-forgotten past came Mikhail Borodin, whom Sun Yat-Sen had called 'the Lafayette of the Chinese Revolution.' He was now the editor of the *Moscow News*, the only English-language newspaper in the Soviet Union. Alexander Troyanovsky, the first Soviet Ambassador to the United States, turned up. So did Jacob Suritz, the former Soviet Ambassador to Paris and a delegate to the League of Nations.

One night in the lobby I ran into Alexander Afinogenov, the popular dramatist, whose play, *Distant Point*, was then being performed in London. He was a tall, handsome man with a boyish face, and he was wearing the uniform of a Soviet war correspondent.

'When are we going to play poker?' he asked me. 'It's been years since I've played with Americans. We must have a game soon.'

'Yes,' I said, 'it will have to be soon. I'm leaving in a few days.'

The game never was held. Afinogenov returned to Moscow, went on duty as an air-raid warden, and was killed by a German bomb a week after I last spoke to him.

One afternoon a group of familiar faces appeared in the lobby — Nina, Oscar Emma, John Evans, Sergei, Alexei, their wives and children — thirteen persons in all. They had left Moscow the day after our departure, driven to the Volga, and then come down by river steamer. Kuibyshev was already bulging with foreigners and Soviet government employees. There were no rooms in the hotels and no vacant apartments. Once again the indomitable Shapiro set to work and found places for his retainers in the rooms of friends, in the public rooms of the hotel, and wherever space could be had.

They were not the only refugees from Moscow. I used to wander down the terraced hills to the Volga docks to see the women from the capital lugging their bundles and their children off the paddle-wheel steamers which came down the river from Kazan. They used to sit on their bundles for hours in the pale autumn sunlight, waiting with characteristic Russian patience for someone to tell them where they could sleep. From the opposite direction the steamers brought soldiers from the Ukrainian front, men bearded and unkempt, their elbows out, and with holes in their shoes and trousers. These were the remnants of some of Budyonny's divisions which obviously had taken a heavy pounding. Some of the men limped from wounds which had not yet completely healed, but others still marched with spirit. They were being reorganized and re-equipped and would be sent back to Timoshenko, who had taken command of the southern front.

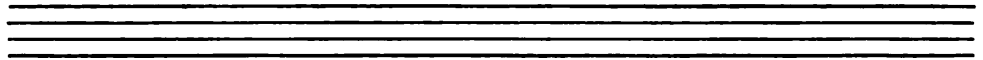
It was time for me to leave the Soviet Union. I could not cover the war from Kuibyshev and there was no point in staying. Sir Stafford Cripps and Geoffrey Wilson of the British Embassy offered me a place in a plane which was being sent to Teheran to bring Sir Walter Monckton, the Director-General of the British Ministry of Information, to Kuibyshev.



But it is no easy matter to get out of a country at war. The Foreign Office, the police, the intelligence service, and no one knows how many other departments want to know all about you before they set you free. In Kuibyshev it was exceptionally difficult to obtain an exit permit because some of the government agencies had just arrived and did not have all their records. I went from one department to another for two or three days without making much progress. Then Shapiro gave me the same advice as the old armaments engineer: 'If you want to get something done in Russia, ask a woman to do it.' I put my case in the hands of Ambassador Steinhardt's Russian secretary, Madame Chichkina, and Valentina Genne of the Intourist organization. Both were swamped with their own duties, but they went to work for me and cut through all the red tape in a single day. At two o'clock in the morning Miss Genne came back from the police station with my exit permit.

Before I left Kuibyshev, however, I pieced together from the stories of the refugees what had happened in Moscow in the hours after our departure.

## THEY ALSO SERVE...



ON THE body of a German staff officer who fell in the battles around Briansk late in August, Russian soldiers found a plan for an offensive against Moscow. Part of this plan was marked in a way which suggested that it had been dictated personally by Hitler. The plan provided for a number of converging thrusts toward Moscow — from the Valdai hills in the northwest and from Roslavl, Briansk, and Orel in the southwest. As these thrusts progressed toward the capital, the German air force was to pound the Soviet lines of supply and the fighter and bomber airdromes around Moscow. When von Bock's army reached the capital, it was to swing south and make contact with the forces of Field Marshal von Rundstedt in the Ukraine. This great pincer movement was designed to cripple or destroy the Soviet armies on the central and southern fronts at one stroke.

The Soviet counter-offensives at Yelnya and Briansk in August and September threw the Germans off their stride and delayed their supreme effort against Moscow until October. When it came, however, it was based on the same principles as the plan found on the German staff officer. Avoiding the strong defenses which the Red Army had constructed east of Smolensk, the Germans smashed toward Moscow from the northwest and the southwest.

For at least a week before the offensive began, the Soviet general staff knew that it was imminent. In the last days of September, everything pointed toward a desperate German effort to reach Moscow before the winter. Reports from partisans and other sources showed that von Bock was massing men and material in a great crescent swinging from the Valdai hills through Smolensk in the center and then to the west of Roslavl and Briansk to the region of Orel, two hundred miles southwest of Moscow. Each day's air reconnaissance brought back reports and pictures of German transport columns moving up to the central front. Corroboration of this evidence was obtained from the British intelligence service, which warned the Soviets that the blow was about to fall.

Although the Germans attacked with unparalleled fury, the Red Army met the onslaught with confidence and resolution. At first the Soviets held their ground or yielded it only little by little. But they had miscalculated the German strength at one point — Roslavl. Here von Bock had concentrated more tanks, motorized units, dive-bombers, and fighters than the Soviets had reckoned with. At the end of the first week in October they broke through the Russian defenses and raced straight up the road toward Moscow, two hundred and twenty-five miles from Roslavl. Across the rolling plains they pushed, bearing down the improvised opposition until they were due south of Mozhaisk. Then they turned north, and on October

14 burst into Mozhaïsk, sixty miles west of Moscow. They had thus flanked the strong defenses which we had seen farther west on the Moscow-Smolensk highway less than a month before. Between them and the capital were only a few anti-tank ditches and hurriedly constructed trenches and fox-holes. Moscow seemed almost within Hitler's grasp. That was why we were ordered to leave for Kuibyshev on October 15.

Until then Moscow had remained calm. Troops poured into the capital by train and truck from the east and moved on by train and truck to the west. Every hour more men and women with spades on their shoulders went forth to dig trenches for the defenders. The factories continued to turn out supplies for the central army.

On the morning of October 16, however, the people of Moscow read in the communiqué of the night before that the position on the central front had 'deteriorated' and that masses of German tanks and motorized infantry had broken through the defenses in one sector. They were stupefied. Later in the day the subway trains stopped running. Street-cars and buses ran irregularly and many stores closed. Wild rumors went round the city — rumors that the government had left the Kremlin, rumors that orders had been issued to scrap the machinery in the factories. Pupils of the boys' technical schools began to march out of Moscow on the road to the east. The secretaries and servants of the diplomatic corps who left Moscow by car late in the afternoon found the road to Gorky jammed with the cars of fleeing Russians. A few miles out of the city German planes appeared, cars crashed together and hundreds scurried to shelter in the ditches. Convoys of troops, tanks, and artillery coming from the east had to struggle against the current for mile after mile.

Hitler's scenario was being acted out. True, only a few thousand of Moscow's four million people had yielded to the

strategy of terror, but how much longer would the others hold? If the people continued to pour onto the highways, if the bus drivers, the motormen, the mechanics, and the housewives left their posts, the normal life of the city would break down and the army, feeling the insecurity in its rear, would give way, too.

Then the Kremlin spoke. Its mouthpiece was Alexander Shcherbakov, a man almost unknown outside the Soviet Union, but a member of the Polit-Bureau of the Communist Party and Chairman of the Soviet Information Bureau. It was probably as the secretary of the Moscow Committee of the Communist Party, however, that he broadcast to the people of Moscow in the evening of October 16. As all radio sets had been taken up at the beginning of the invasion, the speech did not go over the radio channels, but only over telephone circuits to the loudspeakers installed at street corners and in homes. Standing in the blackout at street intersections, or gathered around the loudspeakers in their apartments, the people of Moscow heard Comrade Shcherbakov speak. It was not an eloquent speech — the Bolsheviks distrust eloquence. Shcherbakov simply gave his people a hard-headed Bolshevik lecture. He told them that Moscow could be saved and would be saved. He told them to go back to their posts and be prepared to fight to their last breath.

Even while he spoke, members of the Communist Party were going through the factories and offices, weeding out the panic-mongers, tightening up discipline and whipping up the courage of the masses. The next morning, Moscow was normal again. The subway trains, streetcars, and buses ran, the shops reopened, the flight from the city slowed down. Troops and supplies poured through the city on the way to the front. Across the plains to the west stretched the lines of women, girls, and old men digging trenches for their soldiers under the merciless attacks of dive-bombers and parachutists. The

army hurled the enemy out of Mozhaïsk. The Soviet forces around Vyazma fought their way out of the German encirclement back to new defense lines. Farther to the west, the Siberian troops, who had stubbornly held the forest line where we had seen them in September, made an orderly withdrawal to new defenses. The German assault went on. Von Bock's legions pressed nearer to the capital. But the rear was now secure and the time came when the Red Army seized the initiative and hurled the invaders back.

This was the story of the defense of Moscow as I heard it in Kuibyshev. I felt that it left most of the real story untold. A year before, I had seen London under the terror. For two fateful days and nights while the bombs rained down, the people of London had wondered — just wondered whether they would stand it — but while they were wondering they went to their shops and stores and offices and carried on until they discovered that they were heroes. Now, like the Londoners, the people of Moscow had carried on. Like the Londoners they had missed their cue in Hitler's scenario. A few thousand, it is true, had responded to the prompter's signal, as a few thousand would respond anywhere, but the millions had stood firm, as they will always stand firm when their leaders are resolute.

Perhaps some day a Russian writer will tell us the story of a housewife, a mechanic, a school teacher during those two or three days in Moscow — what they did and what was passing in their souls. Then we shall know how Moscow was saved.

## BEHIND THE CAUCASUS

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THE hoar frost was glistening on the wooden roofs of the peasants' cabins as I drove out of Kuibyshev on the last Sunday in October with Colonel Ivan Yeaton, the United States military attaché, and Dennis McEvoy of the *Chicago Times*. At the airdrome we waded through mud which was ankle deep — a sample of what the Germans were going through — and boarded a Russian-built Douglas transport plane with a gun turret on top and blisters with machine-guns on both sides. The other passengers were the Turkish military attaché, who was returning home; Henry Cecil Ernest Tubbs, King's Messenger, who was taking the British diplomatic bag to Teheran; two young Englishmen who had enlisted in the Finnish Air Force during the Soviet-Finnish War and fallen into Russian hands; and four gentlemen whom I shall identify only as the four Rover Boys.

The plane tore through the mud of the airdrome and was quickly off the ground. We flew low over endless plains of rich black earth. All through the morning and early afternoon we droned on over a country without trees, streams, towns, or roads of any size. Then we sighted the broad Volga. It was frozen over and the peasants had made a path across the ice. Late in the afternoon we came down to refuel at Astrakhan, at the head of the Volga delta. We had time for a bowl of macaroni soup at the airdrome restaurant and then we took off again for Baku, the great oil center on the Caspian, at the eastern end of the Caucasus.

That day and the next our crew of four Red Air Force flyers gave us the ride of our lives. We flew at forty or fifty feet above the marshes of the delta, scaring the wild ducks and sea gulls from their haunts. Then we came to an arm of the Caspian and raced above the water like a speedboat. Once again we were over the delta, frightening herds of cattle and clearing the roofs of thatched houses by only a few feet. As the sun set, we climbed sharply and ran into clouds and mist. The wind whistled around us and we bounced in our seats. Suddenly a mountain loomed ahead. The plane banked sharply and dived steeply through an opening in the clouds onto a broad airdrome, alighting behind a four-engined bomber. The chief pilot, a short, dark-haired Russian, explained that there was fog at Baku and he had been ordered to come down at Makhach-Kala, about two hundred and twenty-five miles north of the oil center, on the western shore of the Caspian.

We entered the airdrome office and waited for cars to come from the town, which was said to be a prosperous community, drawing its wealth not only from the oil pipeline but from the great fruit orchards and vineyards of the region. Darkness settled down and we continued to wait. The Rover Boys grew restless.



'I suppose they're trying to scrape together enough food to give us a meal,' said the first Rover Boy, a short, pudgy individual.

'They probably have to kick all the other guests out of the hotel to make room for us,' said the second, a bald, dyspeptic-looking man.

'If I know anything about the Russians, they're probably trying to make the hotel presentable,' said the third. He was obviously the intellectual of the group. 'I'll bet it's full of lice and cockroaches.'

The fourth, a big stout man with the air of a policeman, just nodded.

'I suppose they don't want to bring us into town in daylight,' continued the third.

'That's right,' agreed the first Rover Boy. 'They don't want us to see the bread-lines. For all we know they may have been shooting people to keep order.'

'I suppose they don't want people to see how well-dressed we are,' speculated the second.

As the minutes went by they multiplied their hypotheses. Then their attention was attracted to a picture on the wall of the office, a picture of Lenin and Stalin in conversation.

'Nasty-looking pair,' observed the pudgy Rover Boy.

'What can you expect of a country which is led by men like that?' asked the intellectual.

'Looks as if they're discussing how to murder a few more people,' said the dyspeptic one.

The cars arrived and we drove into the darkened town. We stopped at a clean little restaurant which, with its garden where the tables could be set in summer, looked like a country restaurant in France. A banquet had been prepared on a long table covered with a clean white cloth. There were plates of cold meats, different kinds of salads and bottles of Soviet

champagne, red and white wines, and brandy. We sat down and were well through the first course when four or five Russians arrived led by a young man in the kind of semi-military costume which Stalin wears. He introduced himself as the local secretary of the Communist Party and we gathered that we were his guests.

Rather dismayed at having started without our host, we sat down and went on with the meal. After the hors d'oeuvres came cabbage soup with cream and then *pojarsky* cutlets of chopped veal. It was excellent food, beautifully served. The Russians were as courteous and friendly as anyone could wish, and they kept filling our glasses with the pleasant wines of the local collective farms and offering toasts to England and America and to our common victory. McEvoy and I responded to the best of our ability, and Colonel Yeaton also made his contribution to the party, but the Rover Boys refused to be seduced. They sat in a bunch at one end of the table, munching hard and looking suspicious.

'Nasty-looking piece of work,' said the first Rover Boy suddenly, nodding his pudgy head in the direction of the party secretary.

'I said so as soon as I saw him,' said the second.

'Villainous-looking specimen,' said the intellectual. 'I'll bet he could stick a knife in you and enjoy it.'

The fourth Rover Boy just nodded and munched.

I looked at the Russian who was sitting at the head of the table. He had a round open face, fair hair, and friendly blue eyes. He seemed all right to me.

'What do you think of him?' I asked McEvoy.

'He looks like a good egg to me,' he replied. 'I don't see anything wrong with him. I wish those damn fools wouldn't shout that way. Some of these people may understand English.'

The party secretary sensed that the dinner was not going well.

'You're not eating enough,' he said. 'When you are in Mak-hach-Kala you must eat more than that. And try some of our brandy. We think it is better than the Armenian kind.'

In a mixture of Russian and German he told us of the thirty-five nationalities which inhabited the region; of the French colony, descendants of Crusaders who had grown tired on their way to the Holy Land and settled down in this country of vineyards and orchards; of the different types of wine grown on the collective farms.

Just then the waitresses came in with platters of roast lamb. This touched the social conscience of the Rover Boys.

'I'll bet the people in this town will have to starve for this,' said the pudgy one, helping himself to a generous portion.

'Yes,' said the dyspeptic man. 'They probably scraped together everything they had just to impress us.'

'That's what they're trying to do,' agreed the third. 'They're just trying to impress us. Trying to make us think there's lots of food in Russia.'

The fourth was so busy with the lamb that his point of view remained unexpressed, but the first carried on.

'Leave something on your plate,' he said to all of us in a loud voice. 'It's the only way those poor devils in the kitchen will get any food. They don't get anything else, you know.'

'It just shows how rotten the whole system is,' said the intellectual, summing up for our benefit. 'These people would really like nothing better than to have their czar back again. Just give them their czar and their priests again and they'd be the happiest people in the world.'

After the dessert, the party secretary and his companion wished us good night and went away looking rather bewildered. The waitresses, tall, well-built women, who looked too well-fed, if anything, refused our tips. We entered our cars and drove up a mountain in the blackout to a big hotel

or villa which had been converted into a summer rest home for workers. It was like a Swiss mountain hotel, clean and modern. My bed was comfortable and I slept well.

In the morning we looked down on the city which lay between the blue Caspian and the mountains. It was the most modern city I had seen in the Soviet Union, with many big apartment buildings and factories and broad streets bordered with trees. We drove down to the restaurant for breakfast. Our Russian friends did not appear, but the meal was even better than the one the night before. The waitresses again refused tips, and gave us bottles of mineral water for our journey.

Driving along the shore road to the airport we saw soldiers and sailors digging entrenchments, putting anti-aircraft and anti-tank guns into position, and going through exercises on the mountain-side. The Soviets were fortifying the northern approaches to the Baku oil center in case the worst should happen.

We took off quickly and flew out over the sea. Below us the wings of the wild ducks shimmered in the sunlight as they rose from the water. We dropped down to forty feet above the surface and raced over the waves. On the shore, forests of derricks appeared, marking the northern limits of the Baku oil fields. We flew mile after mile with the derricks on our right, then turned toward the land and climbed to get over the coastal hills. In a moment, we dived down onto the sun-baked airdrome at Baku.

At four o'clock we hopped off again for Iran without having gone through any kind of passport or customs inspection. Three pretty girls in blue overalls came out to the runway to wave good-bye to our flyers. The pilot showed them what he could do. The wheels were no sooner off the ground than he banked sharply to the right and the wing seemed to graze the

surface of the airdrome. We skimmed over fighter-planes on the ground and barely cleared the trees at the perimeter of the field. Then began the most harrowing game of leapfrog I ever hope to see. Across our course, between the airdrome and the coast, stretched five or six parallel lines of telephone wires. We skimmed the first, swooped toward the ground and rose again just in time to clear the second, then down and up and down and up until we reached the coast.

We turned south and climbed steadily to clear the mountains. Everywhere below us were gun-pits and trenches covering the mountain trails which led down to Baku. The Caucasus Range, here at its eastern extremity, was a great mass of gray rock without trees or plants of any kind. We flew toward a high ridge, and just as we cleared it a camel caravan struggled over it from the direction of Iran. Asia lay before us.

The sun was going down behind the mountains to the west as we neared Pahlavi, the Iranian port on the southern shore of the Caspian. Ahead of us appeared a coast which seemed incredibly green, and we flew in over a village of thatched huts built on poles in the center of little rectangular gardens bordered by poplars and cypresses. Everything was so fresh and green that by comparison with the wintry bleakness of Russia this country seemed a veritable paradise. We circled over a clearing, waiting for a herd of Brahman cattle to amble off the runway. A crowd of barefoot men and children and a few women in mauve-colored gowns and veils watched us come down.

The Soviets had occupied northern Iran in August at the time the British moved into southern Iran. The two powers had decided upon this joint occupation in order to forestall a possible attempt by pro-German elements to seize control of the country. With the coming of the British and the Russians, the Iranian people had risen against the Shah, Reza Khan

Pahlavi, and he had been forced to go into exile. He was a colorful figure who had started his career as a penniless soldier and gained control of the country with the support of the British. During his reign of less than twenty years, he had pacified the turbulent tribes and done much to modernize Iran, but he left behind him a reputation for cruelty and greed which has seldom been equaled, even among Oriental despots. It was said that he horsewhipped his generals and cabinet ministers and poisoned his political enemies. He dispossessed rich and poor alike until his estates were said to exceed the combined areas of Belgium and the Netherlands. By means of state monopolies, he increased his personal fortune to such an extent that he was reputed to be one of the richest men in the world. Upon his downfall, one of his sons, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, had become Shah, and now a liberal government, which included several noted scholars, was trying to rehabilitate the impoverished country.

The Soviet Consul General met us at the airport and drove us to the Grand Hotel, a reasonably comfortable establishment owned by a Greek family. Beggars and ragged townspeople gathered at the door and watched us enter, and they were still there when we stepped out before dinner for a stroll along the main street. How different this little outpost of the capitalist world was from socialist Russia! On one side of the street were the food shops with their pyramids of rosy pomegranates, purple eggplant, lemons, limes, and all kinds of vegetables. On the other side, the windows were filled with electrical appliances, razor-blades, toothpaste, shaving cream, cosmetics, chocolate bars, and all kinds of cheap goods dumped by the Germans before the Allied occupation. Moscow had its model stores, and as privileged foreigners we had lived well in the Soviet Union, but now we suddenly realized how long it was since we had seen abundance like this. We must have

behaved like boys out of school, calling to each other to look at the wonders in the shop windows as we walked along the dimly lighted street.

We had dinner at the hotel. Again the food was plentiful and good — soup, chicken, string beans, salad, and fresh fruit. At the door stood the vanguard of the starving millions of Asia, but this time the Rover Boys forgot to leave something on their plates. We were back in a world we knew, all was for the best, and Conscience stood at ease.

# 19

## THE BRIDGE AT PAHLAVI

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ALL night long the tractors and trucks of the Red Army clattered over the cobblestones in the square. Iran was secure and part of the army of occupation was being hurried back to the Caucasus to strengthen Timoshenko's forces. In the morning the withdrawal continued. Trucks and trailers carrying munitions, bridging materials, troops, and cavalry horses rolled past the Grand Hotel down to the harbor where a rusty little steamer was being loaded.

I strolled across the square with the warm sun on my back. How good it felt after the cold and mist of Russia! I wandered up the road to a little concrete bridge from which I could see the harbor and the blue Caspian beyond. Over the bridge passed the Medes and Persians — limping beggars, blind men



in tatters, women glancing furtively through soiled white veils, peasants balancing trays of sunflower seeds on their heads, donkey boys sadly chanting the praises of their pomegranates. Lucky the man among them who had sandals or shoes. Still more lucky the man whose eyes had been spared by trachoma.

I lingered on the bridge in the grateful sunshine, now eyeing the heirs of that talented race which once had ruled the East, now looking out over the harbor toward the country I had left. Here, I thought, you have the contrast. Here is Asia plodding along in her age-old ways, her miserable children but dimly aware of their glorious past and almost bereft of hope for the future. Over there is a new country, striving hard to draw away from this Asia and overtake the West, her people so confident of the future and so determined to win it that they are underwriting it with their lives. Here until a few days ago ruled an Oriental despot raised to the throne by a foreign power, and the wealth which escaped his hands flowed into foreign coffers. Over there, though Asia's hold on government and people still cannot be denied, a bold experiment is under way to end the exploitation of man by man and divide the wealth equitably among those who produce it. Here in this neglected outpost of the capitalist world the shops are full of things to buy and I have the money to buy them. Over there, if I belonged to that country, I should be able to buy much less (though more than these poor wretches can buy here), and I should have to take comfort in the knowledge that it was worse in the past and would be better in the future. Here women still wear the veil in token of their servitude. Over there, behind those girls in overalls at Baku, stand the millions of women in the factories, in the hospitals and schools, in every art and profession, and in the hundreds of elective councils which are educating the people to a new way of life.

So I mused as I leaned on the railing in the warm sunshine. If I had gone to the Soviet Union under other circumstances, I wondered, would my parting thoughts have been the same? If I had gone when the purge was taking its toll in the offices, the factories, and the army, I might have left Russia as so many had left, thinking that there was no hope for this country and its people. But I had gone at an epic moment when the government was calling for sacrifices such as few nations had made before and the people were giving all that was asked, and more. If I had gone as a liberal in search of a Utopia, I might have seen only that this country still was far from being a Utopia. Or if I had gone as a communist to find the Workers' Paradise, I might have cried as so many had cried, 'There is no god but Marx, and Stalin is assuredly not his prophet.' But I had gone as a reporter who tried to see things as they were and then discover why they were that way. I had attempted to look at Russia with a photographic eye and then find the background of history, tradition, or doctrine which explained what I had seen.

Until I went to the Soviet Union, I had failed to comprehend the magnitude of the problem which the Soviets had faced, how much they had accomplished and what a stupendous task remained to be done. Geography, the real villain of Russia's story, had shut her off from the great currents of ideas which mellowed our western European civilization. In the dark forest and on the austere plain where the people lived in their scattered wooden villages, the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the French Revolution had raised no echoes. Even the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century had touched only a few of Russia's countless millions. No feudal lords, no churchmen of independent mind, no middle class, no free cities arose to challenge or moderate the power of the czars. Not until the beginning of the twentieth century did

Russia have what could be called a parliament, and even then it was little more than a debating society. Russia was an undisguised autocracy in which the rights of the individual were unknown. Thus the Middle Ages had lingered on into our times.

The evolution of the country was so long delayed that change, when it came, was bound to be violent. It was also certain that whoever gained control of Russia would have to cope with the savage reaction of the old régime and the ignorance and superstition of the masses. It was certain, too, that the new rulers, whatever their creed, would by the laws of history fall heir to Russian ways of doing things and to some of the very institutions and practices against which they themselves revolted.

When the change came, the men who seized power were champions of a doctrine which evoked the fear and hatred of the rest of the world. Thus they faced not only the reaction of the old régime but the armies of America, Britain, France, Germany, Japan, and the smaller powers. That had left a mark upon them. They had never ceased to fear and distrust the capitalist world. They were never inclined to underestimate its strength or its capacity to do them mischief. Until I went to the Soviet Union I did not realize how deep and genuine was this fear of the 'capitalist encirclement,' nor did I appreciate how much of the repression and cruelty which the western world found so abhorrent was the product of this fear.

When the fighting was over, the Bolsheviks stood in possession of a country which was a century behind western Europe and America in economic development and three or four centuries behind in the evolution of those rights and free institutions which are the pride of the Anglo-Saxon countries. They took hold of this great hulk of a country and tried to propel it from the sixteenth or seventeenth century into the

twenty-first. So ambitious a program was bound to cause hardship and suffering, and Bolshevik methods did not make the way easier. The world was appalled by the toll of human victims in the campaigns for industrialization and collectivization. Nevertheless, the Bolsheviks had pushed on, impelled partly by the fear that that capitalist world would soon strike again. Well, they were right. Hitler had led a continent against them.

By the time the blow fell, the Soviets had made up much of that century of economic backwardness. The Soviet Union stood in the front rank of the great industrial powers of the world. But those centuries of arrears in the development of freedom were another matter. The painful evolution which in the case of the Anglo-Saxon countries had taken a thousand years could hardly take place in Russia overnight, or even in two decades.

As I stood on the bridge at Pahlavi I felt oppressed by the weight of history. I could only regret that the historical law which worked in my favor by giving to me the freedoms which my fathers had won worked against the Russians whose fathers had known only oppression and servitude. I could only feel sad that these people who deserved so well could not immediately receive their full deserts. But my regret was tempered by faith in the people themselves. I had seen how well they knew how to die and how desperately hard they were trying to learn how to live. I had witnessed their generosity, felt their loyalty, and partaken of their hospitality. I had seen, too, their eagerness to learn and their aptitude for the training in the arts and sciences which was now open to them.

As I looked out over the sea toward that bleak but not unkindly land, I felt certain of one thing. Some of these people may know the conqueror's yoke for a time, but not for long. No one will ever cast them back into the darkness from which

they have raised themselves. They are going forward. Science, the arts, the great common fund into which mankind pours its knowledge and achievement will be the richer for their enthusiasm, their skill, their eager intelligence. The Soviet people are on their way.



PART THREE

THE

ROAD AHEAD





## THE QUESTIONS COME HOME

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THE Red Air Force plane carried me high above the tea and rice terraces of northern Iran, the lava fields of pink and faded green, and the ancient trail where the Old Man of the Mountains ambushed the Crusaders, and put me down in modern Teheran. Here, where the new government was striving valiantly to repair the damage done by the tyrant, the people nervously awaited the coming of the Germans, whose agents whispered in the shadows of the mosques that Hitler was a Moslem. I traveled down the Trans-Iranian Railway with its two hundred tunnels to Ahwaz, where the British had made their headquarters in southwestern Iran. Then I sped by car across the roadless desert to the Shatt al Arab and crossed it in a punt plied by two ancient Arabs. The British were

building a mighty base at Basra, near the gates of the Garden of Eden, but again the serpent was not idle and the Iraqis, cousins of the Arab tribes which Lawrence had raised 'before the breath of an idea,' were drifting to Hitler for want of an idea.

The British flying boat *Cleopatra* carried me over the shark-infested Persian Gulf, the oil fields of Bahrein, the Arabian Desert, and the mountain outposts of Baluchistan to Karachi. Still in the flying boat, I crossed the deserts and mountains of northern India. One night in Calcutta I wandered through the back streets where the children of Mother India slept on the sidewalks in their rags and I thought for a moment of that British officer at Archangel who had cried, 'Twenty-five years and this is all they can show!' That is sometimes a harsh standard by which to judge the progress of a people.

I flew over the Bengal jungles and the mouths of the Ganges to Rangoon, with its golden temples blazing in the tropic sun and its listless people soothing their cares with betel nut. Then I went on over the green rice fields of Thailand and the tin mines and rubber plantations of Malaya to Singapore. Complacent, unsuspecting Singapore — a Victory Ball every night, a V sign on every house! From there the Clipper took me to Manila. Here the atmosphere was more businesslike. For the first time I saw what America had done as a colonial power. Not very much, if you believed Americans in Manila, but one night one of the wisest of them all, a man who had given his life in unselfish service to the Philippines, told me: 'Well, we've done everything wrong but there's one thing that can't be denied. This is about the only place in Asia where you can get a smile from the native. And they'll fight for us.'

On the way across Asia I had marveled at the success of German propaganda. Almost everyone I met accepted the German version of the war in Russia: the Red Army was

smashed and the war about over. That was not the impression with which I left the Soviet Union, so I took advantage of my stay in Manila to cable a series of articles predicting that the Soviets would be able to face a new campaign in the spring of 1942.

Then, in convoy again, I sailed for home at the end of November. Because of the foresight of someone in the navy, the *President Coolidge* and her two companion vessels took a roundabout course and were south of the equator, far from the Japanese mandated islands, when Japan attacked the United States on December 7. The biggest ship on the Pacific was, however, too tempting a target for the Japanese to overlook and we sailed cautiously with many changes of course until we reached Honolulu ten days later. There I had an opportunity to see what had happened at Pearl Harbor and to convince myself that Americans could 'take it' as well as the British, the Russians, and the Spaniards. Then we moved on and sailed safely through the Golden Gate on Christmas Day.

I soon discovered that Americans were eager to learn as much as they could about that great and little-known country which had become America's ally. In the first few weeks after my arrival, they wanted to know first of all whether the Red Army would hold, and then they asked almost invariably, 'Are the Russians going to double-cross us?' I had left the Soviet Union with the firm conviction that the government and people were determined to drive the Germans off their soil and smash Hitler. It seemed to me that if they made a deal with Hitler — assuming such a deal were possible — they would lose in the long run no matter who won the war. They were intelligent enough to realize that if Hitler won he would eventually turn on them, and if the Allies won the Soviet Union would be condemned to isolation and a reinforcement of that capitalist encirclement which they had always feared so much.

There was, however, one possibility, which I felt could not be overlooked. If the Soviets ever became convinced that America and Britain were trying to fight the war to the last Russian, they would take whatever steps they could to save themselves.

Of course I met Americans — obviously those who would be loudest in their denunciations of a Soviet 'double-cross' — who hoped that America and Britain would be able to hold back and allow Hitler to bleed the Soviets to death. I met others who were glad that so mighty a nation was fighting at our side, but who feared that we would pay a heavy penalty for this collaboration after the war. They seemed to feel that Stalin was so diabolically clever and we Americans such utter fools that he would have our hearts out and we could do nothing to help ourselves. Although they professed to believe in democracy, their attitude implied that American democracy was so rotten that it would collapse under the impact of any foreign ideology, particularly communism. I met still others who felt that the Soviet Union was coming round to our way of thinking, that the Soviet government was moving toward the right, and that Stalin really did not mean what he said about socialism and communism. It was strange how some of these people could warm up to Stalin once they had convinced themselves that he was merely an Oriental despot and not a communist.

All these were but a few. Most of the Americans I met wanted to take a realistic view of the reality that is Russia. They were asking the questions which were at the back of my mind when I set out for the Soviet Union, and many more. How will Russia fit into the peace settlement? Will Stalin try to create a Soviet Europe? Will America be able to deal with a victorious Russia? What kind of policy should we have toward Russia after the war? What are the Soviets aiming at? What about the Comintern? And the world revolution?

They were assuming, of course, that the United States and the Soviet Union would emerge from the war as great powers with their systems of government unchanged. Although it is dangerous to assume anything in this war, I started with the same hypothesis and tried to answer them, taking what I had learned during an all-too-brief stay in the Soviet Union and putting it against the background I had gathered during twelve years of reporting in Europe. If I have now put the answers on paper, it is not because I feel that they are final or complete or wholly satisfactory. I am simply making my contribution, as one American, to the discussion of a problem which Americans must face. I am not writing as an 'expert' or 'authority' or as the proponent of any cause or policy, but as a reporter seeking a reasonable answer to a timely question.

SOVIET AIMS AND  
HOPES

## 1

*Sick die*

(WITH the victory of Stalin over Trotsky the Soviet Union turned aside from the mirage of the world revolution. Stalin and his followers believed that the all-absorbing task before them was to make socialism work in Russia. They were convinced that Soviet socialism could in the long run set such high standards of achievement and provide such prosperity that the peoples of other countries would be impressed by the Soviet example and would want to adopt the Soviet system.

What had the Soviets accomplished up to the time they were attacked? What kind of standard of living had they given their people? How much time did the Soviet leaders think they would need to catch up to the standards set by the United States? In other words, how long would it be before

they could set an example of well-being which might have a revolutionary influence on the American people?

The first five-year plan (1928–1932) lifted the Soviet Union from fifth to second place among the industrial powers of the world. It revolutionized agriculture by transforming sixteen million small peasant holdings into large collective farms. In the opinion of foreign observers, however, it brought a slight decline rather than an improvement in the standard of living.

The second plan (1933–1937) continued the high-pressure development of industry and agriculture. Blast furnaces, electric power stations, foundries, chemical plants, and textile factories sprang up on the plains of European Russia and the Ukraine, in the Urals, and in the new industrial centers of Siberia and the Soviet Far East. The collectivization of farming was practically completed. Hundreds of new machine and tractor stations were established to meet the needs of expanding agriculture. This time there was a noticeable improvement in the standard of living. Thanks to good harvests, bread cards were abolished at the end of 1934. Because of the danger of war in Europe and the Far East, the expansion of heavy industry was accelerated somewhat at the expense of light industry, but the output of consumers' goods was nevertheless doubled. More shoes, caps, suits, dresses, stockings, and household articles appeared in the shops. At the same time, according to government figures, state expenditures on education, health, and other social services increased threefold.

The danger of war, which had influenced the drafting of the first two plans, was again taken into account in the third plan (1938–1942). The output of heavy industry was to rise 100 per cent above the 1937 level, while the output of consumers' goods was to increase 70 per cent. New and reconstructed plant representing a value of 182,000,000,000 rubles was to be put into operation. This was more than the combined total

under the first two plans. The global total under the three plans would amount to 324,000,000,000 rubles. It is difficult to express this sum in dollars because no one has ever found a satisfactory rate of exchange for the currency of a country which gives its people many things for little or nothing and charges them extremely high prices for others. The official rate of the ruble is 5.30 to the dollar, but this is definitely an overvaluation. While I was in the Soviet Union, in order to get some idea of what ruble statistics meant, I used to convert them at the fictitious 'diplomatic rate' of twelve rubles to the dollar, though foreigners in Moscow contended that this was still putting too high a value on the ruble. Taken at this rate, the global investment in new and reconstructed plant since 1928 would amount to \$27,000,000,000. Whatever may be thought of Soviet statistics, this figure helps to explain how Soviet industry was able to turn out war materials in quantities which surprised the world, and particularly the Germans.

Because of the possibility of invasion, the third plan prohibited the construction of new factories in Moscow, Leningrad, and other heavily industrialized centers of European Russia and the Ukraine. Three quarters of all new blast furnaces were to be built in Siberia. Every essential plant was to have a double in another region so that its capture or destruction would not cripple Soviet defense. Many new factories were to be constructed in the remote Urals where they would be safe from invasion and bombing. The development of a new oil-producing region, a 'second Baku,' between the Volga and the Urals was designated 'a task of prime importance and urgency to the state.' By 1942 it was to have an output capacity of 7,000,000 tons a year (the Baku fields have an annual output of 24,000,000 tons). A great hydro-electric project at Kuibyshev, described as the largest of its kind in the world, was to stimulate further the development of the Volga-



Ural region. Other big electrification projects were to be started on the mighty rivers of Siberia and the Soviet Far East. The Far Eastern regions were to be brought as close to self-sufficiency as possible in fuels, metals, machinery, cement, lumber, building materials, and foodstuffs.

Agriculture was to raise its global output by 30 per cent. There were to be big increases in the production of grain, cotton, sugar, beets, flax, hemp, rubber-bearing plants, and subtropical plants such as tea. The 'Soviet California' in Georgia was to yield more citrus fruits than ever before. Soviet farms, which Stalin claimed were already more fully equipped with modern machinery than those of any other country, were to be further mechanized. The state would invest 10,700,000,000 rubles in agriculture and the collective farms would invest more.

The third plan, like the second, made provision for the greater well-being of the people. 'We are making plans,' said Premier Molotov, 'for a rise in the national standard of living which no country, not even the richest and capitalistically most developed, can dream of and which will meet the rapidly growing demands of the working people of town and country.' During the five years, wages were to rise 35 per cent and the national consumption of manufactured articles and food was to increase by 50 to 100 per cent. The plan provided for a more rapid increase of income in the countryside than in the towns in line with the government's policy of gradually bringing the standards of the backward rural population up to those of town dwellers. Expenditures on social insurance, education, health, aid to mothers of large families, and other social services were to amount to 53,000,000,000 rubles, 70 per cent more than under the second plan. Secondary education was to be made universal in the cities and towns. By 1942 there were to be 40,000,000 pupils in elementary and second-

ary schools, compared with 8,000,000 under the Czars, and 650,000 in universities and colleges, compared with 150,000.

## 2

These were the immediate objectives of the plan. How did it fit into the long-range program envisaged by Stalin and his followers?

In the 'continuing revolution' which the Bolsheviks were carrying out, the second plan had brought 'the complete victory of the socialist economic system.' Some members of the socialist and communist families refuse to admit that Stalin has established genuine socialism, but we can avoid a debate on that subject by saying that the second plan brought Russia into the stage of 'Soviet socialism.' 'All exploiting classes have been completely abolished,' said Molotov, 'and the causes giving rise to the exploitation of man by man and to the division of society into exploiters and exploited have been done away with for all time. All this is primarily the result of the abolition of the private ownership of the means of production. It is the result of the triumph in our country of state and of co-operative and collective farm property, that is, socialist property. . . . Socialism, the first phase of communism, has in the main already been built in our country.'

The third plan was to start the long and gradual transition from socialism to communism. This transition stage would require a whole series of five-year plans. In the socialist phase, society was being governed by the principle, 'From each according to his abilities, to each according to his merits.' In the communist era, the principle would be, 'From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs.' With the satisfaction of his needs and desires guaranteed by an economy of abundance, man would work for the joy of working. A highly

educated and cultured being, he would find in his work a means of self-expression. Freed from concern over the necessities of life, he would develop his individuality in a way which would be impossible under capitalism. All those rules of social life which he had known for centuries but not always respected, he would then observe without being forced or constrained. Eventually, when the capitalist encirclement no longer existed, the state would wither away, together with its army, its police, its criminal courts, and other repressive organs, leaving only an administration to supervise the production and distribution of the world's goods.

The Bolsheviks had always believed that communism could be established only by surpassing the capitalist countries in industrial output and creating an era of plenty such as the world had never seen before. 'Labor productivity, in the last analysis, is the most important thing, the chief thing for the victory of the new social order,' said Lenin in the early days of the revolution. 'Only if we outstrip the principal capitalist countries economically can we reckon upon our country's being fully saturated with consumers' goods, on having an abundance of products, and on being able to make the transition from the first phase of communism to its second phase,' said Stalin in 1939. 'The transition to communism implies an abundance of all commodities, from which we are still far removed,' said Molotov at the same time, and he went on, 'This transition to communism implies so high a level of technical and economic development in our country as will exceed by far the present level of any capitalist country, even the economically most developed.'

The third plan, therefore, was to mark the beginning of a race in which the Soviet Union would strive to overtake and pass the most advanced capitalist countries in industrial production. What this entailed was explained in great detail by

Stalin and Molotov at the eighteenth congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in March, 1939. It was this session, the last full congress of the Party, which approved the third plan.

'As regards technique of production and rate of growth of our industry,' said Stalin, 'we have already overtaken and outstripped the principal capitalist countries.

'In what respect are we lagging? We are still lagging economically, that is, as regards the volume of our industrial output per head of population. In 1938 we produced about 15,000,000 tons of pig iron; Great Britain produced 7,000,000 tons. It might seem that we are better off than Great Britain. But if we divide this number of tons by the number of population we shall find that the output of pig iron per head of population in 1938 was 145 kilograms in Great Britain and only 87 kilograms in the U.S.S.R.'

In the boom year of 1929, he continued, the United States produced 43,000,000 tons of pig iron. In order to match the per capita output of the United States, the Soviets would therefore have to produce 50,000,000 or 60,000,000 tons a year instead of 15,000,000. This gap, he estimated, could be closed at the rate of 2,000,000 or 2,500,000 tons a year. Consequently it would be fifteen years or so before the Soviets could equal the 1929 per capita output of pig iron in the United States. As Stalin's estimate was made in 1939, this gap might be closed by 1954, and this date has sometimes been mentioned as the time when the Soviet Union would reach a per capita production of both capital and consumers' goods equal to that of the United States in 1929.

'Hence we require time,' concluded Stalin, 'and no little time at that, in order to outstrip the principal capitalist countries economically.'

Stalin did not mention it, but the Soviets were even further

behind the United States in the output of electric power, steel, machine tools, and many other products of heavy industry than they were in the production of pig iron. And in many branches of the consumers' goods industries they had hardly made a start. They would therefore appear to be much too optimistic if they expected to equal America's 1929 record in these fields by 1954. Even if we make all due allowances for their pioneering enterprise and the supposed advantages of socialist planning, it would seem that they would require at least one or two more five-year plans after that date. Consequently, it would not be unfair to assume that not until 1960 or later could the Soviets expect to equal America's per capita output of 1929. And not until well after 1960 could they hope to achieve that great abundance which they believed to be required for the inauguration of the communist era.

This was the economic or industrial side of the third five-year plan. On the cultural side, too, it was to start the gradual transition to communism. The Bolsheviks recognized that communism would not be possible without a highly educated nation. They now proposed to start educating the ordinary factory worker up to the level of the engineer or technician. 'For the achievement of this huge task of abolishing the distinction between mental and manual labor,' said Molotov in 1939, 'five or ten years will, of course, not be enough. Its full achievement will require several decades.'

Thus this phase of the cultural preparation for communism would require twenty or thirty years. So culturally as well as economically the Soviet Union would not be ready for the communist era until some time after 1960 or even 1970.

3

What about the individual under Soviet socialism? How did the standard of living of the Soviet citizen under the third

five-year plan compare with that of the average American?

Comparisons between a country with a socialist economy and another with a capitalist economy are dangerous. Nevertheless, the disparity between the standard of living of a skilled or semi-skilled worker in the Soviet Union and that of an American worker in the same kind of job is still so great that there need be no hesitation in saying that the Soviet standard compares very poorly on the whole with the American. Although there had been a noticeable improvement since the days of the first plan, wages were low by American standards and they could not provide the food, clothing, and housing which the average American workman enjoys. In the oil-extraction industry the average monthly wage of workers had risen from 130 rubles at the end of the first plan to 307 at the beginning of the third, in the coal-mining industry from 120 to 302, in the metal-working industry from 141 to 282, and in the iron and steel industry from 132 to 275. These were the industries in which the highest wage levels prevailed. Stakhanovites — workers who rationalized their efforts and were paid piecework rates — earned considerably more than these averages. A Stakhanovite smelter named Rybakov who worked in the Kirov steel mill at Makeyevka boosted his earnings to 740 rubles a month. A coal-cutting machine operator at Lysichansk named Bessedin raised his monthly output until he earned 3500 to 4000 rubles.

Soviet authorities, incidentally, scoff at the suggestion that the Soviet Union is moving to the right and away from socialism and communism by establishing differentials in wages. Stalin denies that socialism means equality of income, and Molotov has said, 'The Bolsheviks have always been opposed to equalization of wages as an alien, petty-bourgeois tendency.' In contrast with some theoretical socialists in western countries, Soviet authorities maintain that there must be an eco-

conomic incentive for workers in the socialist stage, which provides for payment according to merit. Even in the far-off stage of communism, when men are rewarded according to their needs, there will be no leveling of incomes, the Soviets say, because the needs of individuals will vary. A man with a family will need more than a single man, a painter or musician will need more to develop his talents than a peasant on a collective farm, and a scientist will need more to equip himself and carry out his experiments than a school teacher.

Differential wages are not the only reminders of capitalism in Soviet socialism as it exists today. Socialism, although it abolishes private property, allows the individual to retain personal property. The Soviets, perhaps naturally enough, interpret this term a little more broadly than English and American law, which limits personal property to movable goods. Under Soviet socialism, a worker may own his own home, and some Stakhanovites were buying pre-fabricated houses on American patterns which were being turned out under the third five-year plan. Peasants on collective farms may own the houses in which they live, a cow, a pig, and a few chickens, and they may privately sell the produce which they derive from this personal property and from the small plot of ground which is allotted to their personal use.

In comparing the Soviet standard of living with the American it is not enough, of course, to cite wages. The Soviet citizen receives important social benefits, many of which are unknown to Americans. He enjoys low rents, free medical treatment, free or low-priced meals at his factory canteen, free or low-priced meals for his children at their school, vacations at the rest homes maintained by his union, vacations for his children in the union's summer camps, occasional free tickets to the theater or opera, and payments from the social-insurance funds which cover old age, sickness, and disability. These pay-

ments are modest but worth while, and are scheduled to rise gradually with the increase in output and wealth.

Nevertheless, taken all in all, the American worker is much better off. 'It is a well-known fact that in our country a considerably smaller amount of industrial products falls to each member of the population than in such countries as the United States, Britain, Germany, or France,' said an unusually frank resolution of the eighteenth congress of the Communist Party. But perhaps the greatest disparity is in housing. In Moscow, where the population has risen since the revolution from two million to four million, two or three families, or even more, frequently share a single apartment with one lavatory and one cookstove. I was told that conditions in the newly built industrial cities are much better and that the situation in Moscow, bad as it is, has greatly improved since the days of the czars. Soviet investigators have estimated that in St. Petersburg before the Revolution the living quarters of a worker covered less than two square meters of floor space; the Soviet 'sanitary norm' is now nine square meters to a person. Some of the dilapidated dirt-floored shacks of czarist times and the old factory barracks in which many families shared one dormitory have been preserved as reminders of what has been left behind.

Under the third plan the government intended to provide 35,000,000 square meters of new housing space. Private individuals building their own homes were expected to add another 10,000,000 square meters. At nine square meters to a person, this would provide living space for 5,000,000 persons. More important than this, the Americanization of the home was to be started under the third plan in order to solve the servant problem. For strange as it may seem, the Soviet Union had a servant problem. Housewives were being drawn into industry, and girls who might have become housemaids were also being lured into the factories by the prospect of higher wages.



'We can arrange things so that people can work at their jobs without having to bother too much about cooking and housework when they come home,' said A. I. Mikoyan, the former Commissar for the Food Industry. 'In this respect we have learned a lot already and have still to learn a few things from the Americans. When the Americans were still enjoying prosperity, when there was a shortage of labor power, domestic servants were hard to get. So the Americans developed those branches of industry which make housework easy.

'What must we do? We must extend the production of gas stoves and electric stoves, convenient crockery and utensils, simple devices for washing dishes, vacuum cleaners, domestic refrigerators, and so forth. We must open more public laundries and dry-cleaning shops, more shops for repairing shoes, pressing clothes, and so on. Moscow and Leningrad already have quite a number of Americanized repair shops where — if they are properly organized as we can and must make them — people can hand over their shoes to be repaired, the job is done in fifteen or twenty minutes, and at the same time you can have your suit pressed while you sit reading the newspaper.'

At the same time the Cossacks of the Don, the boatmen of the Volga, and the housewives of Novocherkask were to be exposed to American delicatessen civilization.

'We must develop to the utmost,' said Mikoyan, 'the production of ready-to-cook and ready-to-serve foods such as breakfast foods prepared from corn, wheat, and rice; frankfurters and sausage; canned meat and milk products; canned vegetables and fruits; tomato juice and fruit juices; fresh frozen, conserved, and parboiled vegetables — corn, string beans, and peas; raw beefsteaks and chops and hamburger steaks ready for frying; fish ready-cleaned at the factory; and other produce. . . .

'The U.S.S.R. is employing American methods in the pro-

duction of ready-to-cook and ready-to-serve foods, but not to an extent sufficient for a country like ours. . . . It is our duty to develop this production to the utmost not only in Moscow and Leningrad, Kharkov and Kiev, Baku and Tiflis, but in all other cities.'

## 4

Hamburgers and washing machines, tomato juice and refrigerators, higher wages and a rising standard of living are all right in their place, but what about the freedom of the individual?

The 'triumph of socialism' under the second five-year plan had brought the socialist Constitution of 1936. The Soviet Constitutions of 1918 and 1924 were militant class documents designed to secure the dictatorship of the proletariat, meaning primarily the industrial workers. They disfranchised outright all 'exploiters,' all owners of factories and stores, middlemen, bankers, well-to-do peasants, members of the imperial family, retainers of the czarist régime, members of the czarist police force, priests, monks, rabbis, mullahs. As the peasants were conservative and heavily outnumbered the townspeople, the vote of one worker counted as much as the votes of five peasants. The new constitution swept away these disabilities and inequalities. In the words of article 135, 'All citizens of the U.S.S.R. who have reached the age of eighteen, irrespective of race or nationality, religion, educational and residential qualifications, social origin, property status or past activities, have the right to vote in the election of deputies and to be elected.'

One of the most striking features of the Constitution was a Bill of Rights and Duties. Soviet citizens were guaranteed the right to work, the right to rest and leisure, the right to pensions

in old age, and for sickness and disability, and the right to education. Women were guaranteed equal rights with men. Article 124, so much criticized abroad, guaranteed freedom of religious worship as well as freedom of anti-religious propaganda. Freedom of speech, of the press, and of assembly, inviolability of the person and of the home, and privacy of correspondence were likewise guaranteed.

The Constitution read as if it were to take effect at once, but from interpretations in the Soviet press it appeared that it was to be put into force gradually as the situation at home and abroad permitted. 'How fully and quickly all its statutes will be put into effect depends upon a number of factors, chiefly war,' wrote Albert Rhys Williams in *The Soviets* in 1937. The new electoral provisions were applied at once, but the real test was the application of the guarantees of individual liberty. And here the basic issue was the future of the secret police, because, no matter what the country, the existence of a secret police is incompatible with the security of the individual.

Before the Constitution was ratified by the various republics of the U.S.S.R., the Kremlin took steps to put a check on the activities of the secret police. This was in that brief period between 1934 and 1936 when more goods appeared in the shops and life became a bit easier for the Soviet citizen. Then in August, 1936, still before the ratification of the Constitution, Zinoviev and Kamenev, two old Bolsheviks, were put on trial and executed. In January, 1937, after the Constitution had been promulgated, Piatakov, Radek, and others were tried, then Tukhachevsky and a large group of prominent army officers, and finally Bukharin and other old members of the Party. The great purge was on, and the secret police became more active than ever. If the Soviet leaders had ever dreamed of casting this arm aside, they quickly changed their minds.

In his speech to the eighteenth Party Congress in March,

1939, Stalin indicated that the Soviet Union would need some kind of secret police as long as it was threatened by a capitalist encirclement. Citing the treason trials, in which it was alleged that the 'Bukharinites' and 'Trotskyites' had been in the service of foreign espionage organizations, he said that the Soviets had gravely underestimated the dangers of this encirclement. 'A country which is surrounded by a capitalist world is subject to the menace of foreign military attack,' he stated. 'It cannot therefore abstract itself from the international situation, and must have at its disposal a well-trained army, well-organized punitive organs, and a strong intelligence service.' These arms of the Soviet state, he added, had now turned their edge to the outside of the country against external enemies, that is, against 'the spies, assassins, wreckers sent into our country by foreign espionage services.' They were no longer needed for the suppression of classes or individuals within the country. Whether or not this distinction between the inside and outside of the country was a genuine one, the important thing was that the secret police was to remain.

I did not bring back from the Soviet Union any new explanation of the purge, and I feel that those foreign apologists for the Soviets who are trying to explain it away as nothing more than the elimination of the fifth column are oversimplifying a very complicated matter. In his speech to the eighteenth Party Congress, Stalin himself admitted that the purge of party members had been carried too far — that some had suffered who could not be considered fifth columnists by any standard. 'It cannot be said that the purge was not accompanied by grave mistakes,' he stated. 'There were unfortunately more mistakes than might have been expected. Undoubtedly we shall have no further need of resorting to the method of mass purges.' Upon the motion of Stalin's lieutenant, Andrei Zhdanov, the Congress adopted

a resolution abolishing the mass purge. Finally, Stalin instructed the Party 'steadfastly to carry into effect our socialist Constitution, to complete the democratization of the political life of the country.'

Some authorities on the Soviet Union believe that Stalin sincerely intended the Constitution to be a charter of freedom. Stalin's critics on the other hand have regarded the Constitution as the height of 'Stalinist cynicism.' Without trying to read Stalin's mind, let us look at a few facts. A first point is that the Constitution was granted freely. It was not wrested from an unwilling ruler like the Magna Carta. Stalin was under no immediate compulsion in 1936 to put a democratic constitution before his people. A second point is that individual freedom would have to be attained before the Soviet Union could enter the era of communism, which was the professed objective of the governing party. The Constitution was issued just before the beginning of the long transition from the socialist phase to the communist era. It was part of the educational program to fit the people for communism. Obviously a generation, or even the children of a generation, which had been ruled by coercion would be unfitted for the free and unconstrained cooperation which is the communist ideal.

A third point is that, whatever were Stalin's intentions, the Constitution was a great educational document, especially for a country whose constitutional development was so retarded. Before it was adopted, it was discussed at thousands of meetings in town and country, on the steppes of the Ukraine, among the Laplanders of the Arctic, in the fishing villages of the Far East. Millions of copies of the final draft were printed and distributed in all the languages of the Soviet Union. It was drilled into children in school. I saw copies in military barracks, on a collective farm, and in a rest center at the front. For the first time, perhaps, the Tartars of the Volga, the Uzbeks in the

deserts of central Asia, the Kazaks on the foothills of the Pamirs, the Kirghiz along the desolate frontiers of China became conscious of rights which Anglo-Saxons had won many generations ago. It was possible that they did not fully understand them as yet, but they would in time. And the politically educated younger generation, on whom the communists were relying, did understand them. In other countries, people who had become conscious of these rights had never ceased to fight for them. And if the historical development of the Soviet people was like that of the peoples of the western countries, they would not rest content until they had won these rights for themselves. This was the historical significance of the Constitution.

## 5

Much of the careful blueprinting of the third five-year plan was reduced to waste paper by the German invasion. Even before Hitler attacked, the plan had been drastically revised. It had hardly been approved by the Party Congress when the danger of war again led to the expansion of heavy industry at the expense of consumers' goods industries. In October, 1940, the educational program was scaled down, presumably to draw more man-power into the factories. As the German army swept across European Russia, dams, power plants, newly developed mines, and factories were sacrificed to the gods of war. Some of the most enterprising and courageous representatives of Soviet youth died in the defense of Leningrad, Smolensk, Moscow, Kiev, Kharkov, Rostov, and the Crimea. Training courses for engineers and technicians were interrupted. The entire nation concentrated its efforts on unproductive output.

How much will this retard the Soviets? Ten years, per-

haps considerably more. If they had once hoped to equal America's 1929 per capita production by about 1960, they now could not expect to reach that level until 1970, or perhaps even later. In 1941, before entering the war, the United States exceeded its 1929 records in many fields. If Americans resolutely face their problems after the war, it is reasonable to assume that they will push their records even higher. Assuming that they do tackle their post-war problems as resolutely as the Soviets tackle theirs, it will be a quarter of a century or more before the Soviets can expect to set standards of well-being for their people which will compare with American standards. And before they can have a revolutionary influence on the American people, they will also have to solve the problem of individual freedom — the most difficult problem of all for a country whose constitutional history is so meager.

I am aware of the absurdities involved in putting the United States and the Soviet Union into a watertight compartment and ignoring other countries and other influences. I am also conscious of the dangers in comparing a capitalist economy with a socialist economy, American aims with Soviet aims, and a highly developed country with a country whose industrial development is just getting under way. I am merely trying to show that for a generation or more after this war — if Americans go forward courageously — the Soviets will not be able to exert a direct revolutionary influence on America by the example of their achievements.

## WHAT NEXT TOVARICH?

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ON NOVEMBER 6, 1941, Joseph Stalin faced an audience of troops and civilians in the Red Square and made his second public speech of the war.

‘The Soviet rear was never so strong as today,’ he said. ‘It is quite credible that with such losses as we have today any other state would fail to withstand the ordeals and would deteriorate. If the Soviet system was able so easily to withstand the ordeal and still further to strengthen its rear, it means that the Soviet system is now the strongest system.’

The war did nothing to shake the faith of the Soviet leaders in their aims and methods. On the contrary, as Stalin indicated, it strengthened their conviction that they were on the right course. One country after another had collapsed under Hitler’s blows. Only the country of Soviet socialism had been able to hold the field against the great mass of Hitler’s armies.



It may therefore be taken for granted that at the end of the war, if the Soviet régime survives, the Soviet leaders will try to push forward along the same course as before. With communism as their ultimate goal, they will strive to overtake the leading capitalist countries in all fields of production. That will still be their primary economic objective. But it will not be simply a matter of starting where the third five-year plan left off. In the first place they will have to undertake the heavy task of reconstruction. And — more important — they will have to take into account the terrific strain to which the Soviet people have been subjected.

Every war of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was followed by ferment in Russia. The young officers who returned from the Napoleonic Wars inspired the first Russian political movement, the feeble and unsuccessful Decembrist rising of 1825. The unrest after the Russian defeat in the Crimean War led to the emancipation of the serfs in 1861. The Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878 was followed by the assassination of the Czar Alexander II. The Russian defeat in the war with Japan brought on the ‘revolution’ of 1905 which gave Russia its first representative and legislative Duma. And the First World War led to the overthrow of the Romanov Dynasty and the Bolshevik Revolution.

The Soviet government, of course, has claims to the loyalty of the people which the czars did not have. It has given them opportunities which they never had before. But every government, whatever its past contributions to the welfare of its people, will have to face more or less grave internal problems when this war is over. It must be remembered, too, that the Soviet people have been under an acute strain longer than the people of any other country. After the First World War came the Civil War, the period of foreign intervention, the famine, and the blockade. Then, after what was hardly a breathing

spell, came the series of five-year plans which were conducted on war lines. Finally, the brief war with Finland was followed by the greatest test of all — the war against Hitler.

The third five-year plan held out hopes of more food, more clothes, more household articles, and more semi-luxuries for the Soviet people. Molotov in 1939 mentioned the 'rapidly growing demands of the working people of town and country,' and foreign observers noted the eagerness of the masses to buy consumers' goods which Soviet industry was not yet supplying in adequate quantities. 'No longer do the communists complain about the "accursed wantlessness" of the masses,' wrote Albert Rhys Williams in *The Soviets*. 'They want everything and they want it in a hurry. Tractors in place of wooden plows! Clothes instead of sheepskins! Apartments instead of single rooms! Electric lamps instead of oil and tallow-dips! Leather boots instead of bark sandals! And it is not only the basic necessities that they are demanding but a share in the comforts, luxuries, and graces of life.'

The Soviet people will be a tired people after this war, a people whose hopes of a more plentiful life have long been deferred. Ahead of them will lie a stern new test — a race of twenty-five years or more to overtake the leading capitalist countries. If they are to stay in that race they must be given encouragement and fresh incentives. What can these incentives be?

Some foreign observers in the Soviet Union — men who know the country better than I shall ever know it — believe that the government will have to beat a temporary retreat from Soviet socialism and allow private initiative to operate. This would be following the example of Lenin, who introduced his 'New Economic Policy' in 1921 when the infant Soviet state faced economic disaster after seven years of war. Freedom of trading was restored, private shops were allowed to

open, and foreign capitalists and concessionaires were encouraged to come back. Internal trade recovered and private enterprise flourished alongside the state-controlled industries until the first five-year plan.

With all respect for those who hold this view, I do not believe there will be another New Economic Policy. I should not be surprised to see the Soviet government call in foreign engineers and technicians to help in the tremendous task of reconstruction. But the return of private enterprise is another matter. Stalin and his colleagues have nailed their flag to the mast. They have proclaimed time and again that the exploitation of man by man has ended in the Soviet Union. Stalin, an old man in a hurry, is not the type to restore private property, even as a temporary expedient. Convinced of the all-conquering power of Soviet socialism, he and his colleagues will depend upon Soviet methods, not private initiative, to solve Russia's post-war problems.

Soviet methods, as we have seen, do not exclude economic incentives. There will be Stakhanovites, differential wages, and bonuses after the war just as there were before, and the emphasis on these incentives will, perhaps, be even greater. But higher wages and bonuses do not mean a thing unless you can buy something with them. Even before the war Soviet workers could not satisfy their growing wants. And after the war, we may be sure, there will be a veritable famine of consumers' goods in the Soviet Union.

In order to reward its people for their prolonged endeavors and sacrifices, in order to stimulate them to new efforts, the Soviet government will therefore have to boost the output of the consumers' goods industries. More canned goods, more underwear, shoes, dresses, suits, children's clothes, hairpins, cosmetics, radio sets, and books — these will be the rewards of the workers who set the pace in the coming race with the

capitalist nations. That will mean that heavy industry, including the arms industry, will have to be slowed down in favor of light industry.

Under the best of circumstances, the Soviet Union will require a quarter of a century — at the very least — to catch up with the leading capitalist countries. That means twenty-five years or more of uninterrupted effort — of peace. And if the Soviets are to favor light industry at the expense of heavy industry, it will have to be a stable peace, not the uneasy peace of the nineteen-thirties. The Soviet government will not be able to give its people the necessities and comforts which they will demand if the threat of war compels it once again to keep a great war machine in being.

The Soviet Union will therefore be obliged by internal necessities to work for a long period of peace and stability. Its determination to do this has been manifested in the speeches of its leaders and in the formal agreements it has signed with the United States, Great Britain, and other countries. With the United States it is linked by its acceptance of the Atlantic Charter, by the master lease-lend agreement signed in Washington on June 11, 1942, and by the understandings reached during the visit of Foreign Commissar Molotov to Washington at the end of May and beginning of June, 1942. The lease-lend agreement not only provides for American aid to the Soviets during the war and such aid as the Soviets can give the United States in return; it lays a basis for cooperation after the war in the creation of 'a new and better world.' Specifically it binds the two countries to work together for the betterment of worldwide economic relations, the expansion of international trade, the removal of all forms of discriminatory treatment in international commerce, and the reduction of trade barriers. The Roosevelt-Molotov conversations went beyond this. 'Further were discussed the

fundamental problems of cooperation of the Soviet Union and the United States in safeguarding peace and security to the freedom-loving peoples after the war,' said the communiqué issued by the White House. 'Both sides state with satisfaction the unity of their views on all these questions.'

An even more concrete token of the Soviet determination to cooperate with the capitalist nations in preserving peace is the Anglo-Soviet Treaty signed in London on May 26, 1942, by Molotov and Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden. 'The high contracting parties declare their desire to unite with other like-minded states in adopting proposals for common action to preserve peace and resist aggression in the post-war period,' the treaty says. Pending the creation of this new League of Nations, the two countries agree to give each other all possible aid against Germany and her European allies if they again resort to aggression after the war. If a new League of Nations is not created, this mutual assistance arrangement between socialist Russia and imperialist Britain will run for at least twenty years. If the new league does come into being, with the United States as a member, the Anglo-Soviet alliance will merge into the broader collective security arrangement, the kind of arrangement sought by the Soviet government in the years before 1939. The treaty also binds Britain and the Soviet Union to seek no territorial gains and to refrain from interference in the internal affairs of other countries.

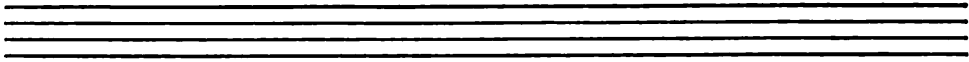
What the Soviet government has in mind has been stated even more clearly in its agreement with the Polish government. 'After the victorious war and the appropriate punishment of the Hitlerite criminals, it will be the task of the Allied States to ensure a durable and just peace,' says the declaration signed by Stalin and the Polish Prime Minister, Wladyslaw Sikorski, on December 4, 1941. 'This can be achieved only through a new organization of international relations on the

basis of the unification of the democratic countries in a durable alliance. Respect for international law, backed by the collective armed force of all the Allied States, must form the decisive factor in the creation of such an organization. Only under this condition can a Europe destroyed by the German barbarians be restored and a guarantee be created that the disaster caused by the Hitlerites will never be repeated.'

All these agreements are not mere scraps of paper. If all the statesmen who signed them were notoriously dishonest and untrustworthy, they would still be of the greatest importance because they are the products of sheer necessity. The Soviet government, which originally believed that its interest lay in instability and revolution throughout the world, now knows that it must join hands with the capitalist nations, great and small, to secure for itself that long period of peace which it cannot do without. And the capitalist governments, which tried to destroy the Soviet régime by force and then attempted to ignore it, now realize that the cooperation of the Soviet Union is indispensable if their countries are to have the peace and security which they will so badly need for many years after the termination of this war.

Thus we find the Soviet Union committed to long-term collaboration with the capitalist powers in the preservation of peace, and its word is supported by the strongest of guarantees — self-interest. . . . But, people ask, what about the world revolution? Won't the Soviets try to 'bolshevize' Europe after the war? And Asia?

## RUSSIA AND REVOLUTION



### 1

ONE afternoon in January, 1936, Maxim Litvinov gave the Council of the League of Nations a lecture on the subject of revolution. Uruguay had suddenly broken diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union on the grounds that the Soviet Legation in Montevideo had promoted a revolutionary uprising in the neighboring state of Brazil. Litvinov denied the charge and brought the affair before the League. After asserting that Uruguay's real reason for breaking relations was the Soviet refusal to buy two hundred tons of Uruguayan cheese, the Foreign Commissar drew a slip of paper from his pocket and read an extract from the Encyclopaedia Britannica about the history of Brazil. Beginning with the middle of the nineteenth century, he cited one revolutionary uprising after an-

other up to the one which put President Vargas in power. 'So you see,' he concluded, glancing around the Council table, 'you do not need a Bolshevik to have a revolution in Brazil.'

The same will be true of Europe after the war. Bolsheviks or no Bolsheviks, there will be revolution in Europe. Even if the Soviet Union could be blocked off from the rest of Europe, even if the autocracy of the czars could be restored in Russia, there would be sharp and radical changes on the European continent. Even if Stalin and the Comintern appealed to the peoples of Europe to maintain the old order, revolution would occur. Europe is sick of a state of affairs which has brought two disastrous wars in twenty-five years. Europe cannot go on with conditions which mean devastation, pillage, blockade, starvation, bombing, pestilence, and famine every quarter of a century. Europe must change or perish. A revolt against our civilization is going on in Europe, and it will come to a head when Hitlerism collapses.

It will therefore be a mistake for Americans to blame the Bolsheviks for the changes which are coming. If they are willing to accept so simple an explanation, their whole approach to the new Europe will be unsound.

Many Americans are obviously alarmed by the prospect of revolution in Europe. Their attitude is understandable, of course, though rather illogical. The old Europe dragged America into two wars in twenty-five years. No other system in Europe could promote more than two all-out wars in such a short period. That would be an economic and physical impossibility. It would therefore seem that America should fear more than anything else the re-establishment of the Europe of 1939, 1929, or 1913. There is no danger of that, however. The Europe which emerges from this war will not be of those vintages.

If Americans will stop to consider what they are fighting



for, they will discover that they are fighting first of all for a revolution in Germany. They are not fighting solely to defeat a man named Hitler. They are not fighting to put power into the hands of Goering or the German Army or the industrialists, landowners, and bankers who put their money on the Kaiser and then doubled their stakes on Hitler. They are fighting to bring about a revolutionary change which will make Germany safe for the world.

A revolution in Germany could not be toward the right — Hitler is as far to the right as anyone can go. It will have to be toward the left. How far toward the left it is impossible to say. There was a big Communist Party in Germany when Hitler came to power, but no one knows how much of its strength remains. It may well be that when this war is over the average sausage-eating, beer-drinking German will have had enough of ideological experiments. He may be willing to make another attempt at liberal democracy. But even if he tries to find salvation in communism, he will receive no fraternal greeting from the Soviet people. It will be a long time after this war before they will be willing to call a German 'Tovarich.'

America is also fighting for an anti-fascist revolution in Italy. Again, the change cannot be to the right. In Italy it may not be so far to the left as in Germany. Hitler destroyed all vestiges of previous régimes, but in Italy the monarchy and the Church remain, and there are influential people in London and Washington who pin their hopes on these two institutions. Moreover, the peasants are politically uneducated and the proletarian elements are still weak.

'We must note the serious weakness of the Italian Communist Party,' said a Comintern report presented to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in March, 1939. 'In all the long years of the fascist dictatorship it has not been able to weld together a strong illegal organization, to carry on serious

work in the fascist trade unions and other fascist mass organizations, or to wean any considerable section of the younger generation from the influence of fascism. The theory of certain Italian communists that only defeat in war can bring about the collapse of fascism is in reality but a mask for opportunistic passivity. This to a large extent explains why the party has been unable to give leadership to the discontent of the masses with the war of Italian fascism in Abyssinia and Spain which has found expression in a number of spontaneous mass actions.'

Italy may therefore achieve some form of liberal democracy.

In France the Vichy government came into existence solely to collaborate with Hitler. With the defeat of Hitler it will lose its reason for being. The Franco régime in Spain was raised on German and Italian bayonets. It cannot long outlive the Axis. Both the Vichy and the Franco governments are as far to the right as it is possible to go. The reaction, therefore, will inevitably be to the left. In Spain, we may be sure, it will be violent.

We thus face an eventual swing to the left in the four big countries of the western half of the Continent. No one can say how far it will go. We can only be sure that so far as world peace is concerned it can be no worse than what went before. The same is true of eastern Europe. We know that nothing which happens there can be worse for stability and peace than the King Carol type of government.

What is true of Europe is true of Asia. The changes which are coming there will be awe-inspiring in their scope and they will not be the work of Bolsheviks. The white man has betrayed his own future in Asia. Everywhere he has lost face. His position will never be the same in India, Burma, China, Malaya. In these lands and in the other vast expanses of the Continent, more than half the human race — peoples of

ancient cultures — will strive to win some of the freedoms which Americans took for themselves in the eighteenth century. To nervous Americans they may well say, 'If that be Bolshevism, make the most of it.'

## 2

But won't the Soviets take advantage of this turmoil to spread their kind of revolution?

That, of course, is a possibility which cannot be overlooked. At the very least we may be sure that the Soviet Union, in its present stage of development, will not help to strangle another Soviet state as the democracies helped strangle democratic Spain. Although Stalin's enemies accuse him of being a narrow nationalist, I think that he has been nationalistic only by compulsion. Fortunately for the capitalist world, that compulsion still holds: the world revolution is not yet at hand. It is true that if revolution is to be spread by the example of their achievements, the Soviets have some noteworthy achievements to their credit. Their success in holding the Germans, for instance, has made a great impression throughout the world. It is also true that although Soviet industrial output cannot be compared with that of the United States, the Soviet standard of living is well above that of Asia as a whole and fairly close to that of the borderlands of eastern Europe. If when the war is over the peasants in these eastern European countries are cursed with the same kind of government they had before the war, the Soviet peasant may soon be well ahead of them and trouble may start in ten or fifteen years.

The spread of revolution, however, must remain a remote objective of the Soviet leaders. Their primary aim must be to solve their domestic economic problems — to double, triple, and quadruple their industrial output — and they cannot al-

low themselves to be diverted from this urgent task by gambling on revolution in other countries. What will be the good of revolutions in Poland, Rumania, Hungary, and even Germany if there is an economic breakdown in the Soviet Union? No amount of revolution abroad will put shirts on the backs of Soviet workers. No amount of revolutionary agitation in western Europe and Asia will give the Soviet Union an industrial system like that of the United States. The basic problem must be met within the Soviet Union; anything else is mere escapism.

The establishment of Soviet republics in Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria, and other countries, it is true, might create buffers for the Soviet Union, ease the fear of the capitalist encirclement, and permit the more rapid expansion of the consumers'-goods industries. On the other hand, it might conceivably place new burdens on the Red Army. It might put an additional strain on the Soviet people, who will be in no mood for foreign adventures after this war. It might complicate the economic problems of the Soviet Union — the Soviet leaders will hardly be eager to assume the burdens of bankrupt countries. And it would certainly harm Soviet relations with America, Britain, and other capitalist countries and thus lead to a new period of instability.

I think it would be safe to say that Stalin will not shake the cherry tree but he will not throw away any ripe fruit which falls into his lap. If any new Soviet republics arise, he will welcome them, but he will not deliberately challenge the capitalist powers to a showdown in the dangerous game of revolution and counter-revolution. For in that game they still hold a number of trump cards. Britain and particularly the United States have the stocks of food which the countries of Europe and Asia will need when the war is over. They have the medical supplies, the doctors, the public-health experts, the engi-

neers, the economists, and other specialists who will be needed to restore these countries. The Soviet Union has nothing to offer here. It will need everything it has for its own people, and perhaps more.

## 3

The negotiations between the Soviets and the other United Nations, particularly Britain, provide further evidence that Stalin does not expect to see a Soviet Europe after the war.

When Eden went to Moscow in December, 1941, Stalin put before him his territorial claims. The recognition of these claims, Stalin said, was to be the test of Britain's good faith in her relations with the Soviets. What the Soviets wanted was the frontier line of June, 1941. They wanted first of all the three Baltic States and the boundary which was drawn in Finland after the Soviet-Finnish War. On this, Stalin said, they would not yield an inch. In Poland they wanted approximately the frontier fixed by Lord Curzon and approved by the Supreme Council of the Allies at the Paris peace conference. The Poles drove the Russians back from this line after the First World War, but the Soviets advanced up to it when Polish resistance collapsed in September, 1939. Here they would be willing to make adjustments in direct negotiations with the Poles and would be willing to compensate Poland for her losses, perhaps by giving her East Prussia and the Corridor and transferring the German population back to the Reich. Finally, the Soviets wanted Bessarabia and northern Bukovina, which they took from Rumania in 1940. All these territories, except Bukovina which belonged to Austria-Hungary, were wrested from Russia by force after the First World War.

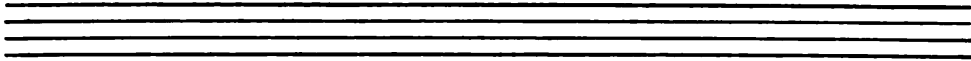
The inference to be drawn from these demands and Stalin's insistence upon their recognition was clear. Stalin was not

anticipating the establishment of new Soviet republics in eastern Europe at the end of the war. He was drawing the strategic frontier which suited the Soviet Union best in order to settle down behind it and solve his all-important economic problems in peace and security.

These claims seemed reasonable enough and Britain, after some hesitation, was prepared to recognize them. The United States, however, objected. Although the American government had disapproved of the severance of most of these territories from Russia after the First World War, it now pointed out that recognition of the Soviet claims would weaken the Atlantic Charter which bound the United Nations to seek no territorial annexations. The British then made a counterproposal to Stalin. If the Soviets would leave their territorial claims in abeyance, Britain would give them a guarantee of security in another form — an alliance to run for twenty years if the United Nations in the meantime did not work out an effective scheme of collective security.

Stalin seized the offer. Again the inference was clear. An effective League of Nations or an alliance with Britain offered him even greater security than his 1941 frontiers. But collaboration with Britain and the other United Nations after the war also implied a renunciation of revolutionary activity. The Anglo-Soviet Treaty did, in fact, bind the two countries to abstain from interference in the affairs of other countries. Once again the written pledge was less important than the guarantee behind it — self-interest.

## AMERICA AND RUSSIA



## 1

A POWERFUL nation which will work for a long period of peace cannot be ignored or treated with hostility by the United States. For the United States, too, will want a stable peace. Here America and the Soviet Union find a common interest, an interest of such paramount importance that it may well override their differences, including the ideological one.

The events of December 7, 1941, shook the deep-seated American belief that peace could be had by staying at home and minding your own business. A number of other nations had learned that lesson in the previous months and years. Their experience and that of the United States seems to show that peace needs to be organized as well as war. Peace requires far-sighted planning, coordination of effort, and mutual sacrifice — though not so great a sacrifice as war. Peace needs its

general staffs and its liaison officers. It needs every Chinese, every Indian, every Frenchman, every Englishman — and every Russian and American, too — who can be rallied to its cause.

There is another lesson to be drawn from the peace that was lost. The peace-loving nations cannot afford to refuse the co-operation of any country which will sincerely work for peace. A country barred from the council table becomes a force for mischief and instability. Snubbed by the Paris Conference, the Soviets took a stand against the Versailles settlement and kept the former Allies in fear of a Russo-German combination which would upset the peace treaties. The Soviets, of course, were largely responsible for their own isolation in those early years. Much as they needed peace and stability for their internal development, they mistakenly thought they had a greater stake in social upheaval. But even after they came out squarely for peace and stability they were not welcomed in the conference halls of Europe. The League of Nations admitted them with ill-grace in 1934 and the British and French governments thereupon became more and more inclined to settle the issues of war and peace outside the League. The Spanish Civil War was dealt with by the Non-Intervention Committee, in which the Soviets formed a minority of one. The fate of Czechoslovakia was settled by the Munich Conference, at which the Soviets did not even have a watching brief. Threatened with isolation and eventual aggression, their efforts for peace ignored, the Soviets acted to protect themselves. They made a pact with Germany, and the Second World War began.

Then the nations which had spurned the Soviets as allies for peace discovered suddenly that they needed the Soviet Union as an ally for war. A British government, to all appearances, had tried to bring about the destruction of the Soviet régime. But when France fell, Winston Churchill knew that Britain



could not possibly win without Soviet aid and, swallowing his personal dislikes, he sought it. Little Holland had refused to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviets, but what chance would there be of re-establishing an independent Holland in our lifetime if the Red Army had not held the Germans in 1941? So all the little nations which had often snubbed the Soviets awoke to the fact that their future depended upon the resistance of the despised Bolsheviks.

America, too, had discovered that the Soviet Union was a worth-while ally. The Soviets, for their part, had known all along that America was an ally to be valued — not only for war but for peace. When the Disarmament Conference held its last plenary session in May, 1934, Litvinov proposed that it transform itself into a permanent peace conference. The United States and the Soviet Union were members of the Disarmament Conference but neither, at that time, was a member of the League. If the conference closed, as it was about to do, the peace mechanism of Geneva would lose the support of two great peace-loving powers. Litvinov therefore wanted to prolong the conference in a new form so that the United States and the Soviet Union could at all times concert their efforts with other peaceful nations. His proposal, like so many others he made, was looked upon as 'just another Litvinov stunt.'

What would be the alternative to accepting Soviet cooperation for peace?

The United States is determined to inflict a decisive defeat on Germany and Japan. No one believes that when that aim is achieved all the peoples of the world will fall into each other's arms and live happily ever after. That would be the ideal outcome but it is out of the question. The people who have been bombed and plundered will not be quick to welcome the vanquished back to the international brotherhood. For a time at least, Germany and Japan will be pariah nations. Will

it then be possible to make a pariah of the Soviet Union too? And will each pariah sulk by himself or will the three join hands and make pariahs of the rest of us?

Or suppose that the war should end in a stalemate with Japan or Germany, or both, undefeated. Where would the United Nations find a counterpoise for Germany in Europe and Japan in the Far East? Only the enlistment of Soviet strength on the side of peace could give the world something better than a brief, uneasy armistice.

The truth is that so far as we can see today there is no alternative to cooperation with the Soviet Union. And as a matter of fact none of the United Nations is seeking an alternative. The Soviets not only want a stable peace but need it as much as any power. This time it will be impossible to exclude them from the peace conference and from the other councils which will shape the post-war world. Their presence at these meetings will, in fact, be a guarantee against their interference in the internal affairs of other nations, for Soviet cooperation with other powers with the benefits it brings to the Soviet Union will be possible only if the Russians refrain from revolutionary activity abroad.

America, too, will play her part in these gatherings. Try as she may, she will not be able to escape it. With the Soviet Union and with Britain, the United States will have to provide the leadership to carry the world through the difficult post-war period. A dwindling number of Americans may still find it distasteful, but America is on the road with Russia.

2

The autocracy of the czars, horrified by the American Revolution, refused at first to recognize the young republic of the West. The American colonials had denied the divine right of

kings. They were conducting a dangerous experiment and, of course, it was doomed to fail. Catherine the Great would not receive Francis Dana, whom the United States nominated as its first minister to Russia. It was only in 1809, thirty-three years after the Declaration of Independence that the Czar Alexander I yielded and received the first American envoy, John Quincy Adams. Russia was the last great power to recognize the United States.

The United States, in turn, was the last great power to recognize the Soviet Union. The Soviets denied the sacred right of private property. They were conducting a dangerous experiment and, of course, it was doomed to fail. Ludwig Martens, the first Soviet envoy to the United States, was deported in 1920. American relief missions went to Russia during the famine and American engineers helped carry out the first five-year plan, but the United States government refused to recognize the Soviets. It treated them, in fact, with unexampled rudeness and contempt. Then in 1933 President Roosevelt established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. One of his motives was apprehension over the situation in the Far East, where the Japanese had already started on their career of conquest. Here America and the Soviet Union had a common interest.

Once relations were established between the young American Republic and the autocracy of the czars they were strangely cordial. Although the ideological differences between them were deep, they had one great identical interest — their most dangerous enemy was Great Britain. The Czar's government followed sympathetically the American efforts in the War of 1812, even when Russia was absorbed in her struggle against Napoleon, and in 1822 Alexander I arbitrated the British and American claims arising from the war. American sympathies were with the Russians in the Crimean War

because they were fighting the British. A few years later, during the American Civil War, Alexander II sent a Russian naval squadron to New York and another to San Francisco. He was acting out of self-interest, because if Britain attacked Russia, as he feared she would, these ships would have been bottled up in Russian ports and destroyed. His action, however, proved of great benefit to the North. It helped to deter the British from establishing a blockade of Northern ports and it secured San Francisco Harbor from attack by the Confederate cruisers *Sumter* and *Alabama*. The United States government was grateful and reciprocated by refusing to participate in an international protest against Russian treatment of the Poles. Two years after the Civil War, it also pleased the Czar's government by buying Alaska, which the Russians knew they could not defend against a possible British attack from Canada.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Russia had gained so strong a position in China that America became concerned. The United States government backed Japan in the events leading up to the Russo-Japanese War and took charge of Japanese interests in Russia during the war. Japan's overwhelming and unexpected victories, however, threatened to upset the balance of power in the Far East, and President Theodore Roosevelt hastened to reverse his policy. At the Portsmouth Conference, he used his influence to moderate the Japanese demands and thus obtained reasonable peace terms for the Russians. The old cordiality returned to Russian-American relations.

This friendliness between the Russian autocracy and the American Republic is one of many examples which show that friendship and collaboration are possible between nations of differing ideologies. What they need is a common interest. But, it may be objected, the United States was not trying to foment revolution in Czarist Russia. That is true, but were

the fears of Catherine the Great entirely groundless? Any country which gives its citizens more freedom and a higher standard of living than other countries puts revolutionary forces into motion. Those forces may take a long time to produce their effect in backward countries. The forces behind the American and French Revolutions are, in fact, just beginning to be felt in some parts of the world. In many far-off lands men are only now aspiring to liberty, equality, and fraternity, and to that more abundant life which America has given her people.

It could be argued that every immigrant who 'made good' in America was an agent for revolution in the country from which he came. The news of his success and of the liberty he enjoyed in America must have made his old neighbors in Europe more conscious of their own lack of opportunity. When that Finnish woman whom I met in the Moscow subway writes to her old neighbors in Minnesota that she is happier in Russia, that she has all the freedom Americans know plus the deeper freedom which flows from greater economic equality, that she has no fear of want because the good things of life are so plentiful — then Americans may begin to worry about a communist revolution.

That time, as I have pointed out, is far away. Even if the fondest dreams of the Soviet leaders are realized, they will not be able to match the per capita output of the United States for twenty-five years, at the very least. And if they are to set an effective revolutionary example to the United States they must show convincingly that they can govern forever after without the ministrations of the secret police. For a country which has always had a secret police that step will be hard to take. Thus, so far as revolution by example is concerned, the American of today need fear nothing from Russia. Provided, of course, that America faces the political and economic problems of the post-war era with courage and resolution.

But what about the Comintern? Here we turn from revolution by example to revolution by propaganda and incitement.

'Propaganda doesn't do anything,' said Stalin in an interview with Walter Duranty. 'Constitutions and systems are changed by natural causes, not by talk or books. In the old days the czars blamed the French or German socialists for importing socialism into Russia, forgetting that the conditions of life and not propaganda determine the course of events. Now I suppose they are making the same mistake in the United States when they say we are re-exporting socialism to Europe.'

The Comintern (also known as the Communist International and Third International) likes to regard itself as the 'general staff of the world revolution.' It has its headquarters in Moscow, partly because it has nowhere else to go. There the activities of the sixty-five communist parties of the world are coordinated by representatives of all or most of them. For many years the governments of other countries were inclined to hold the Soviet government responsible for the sins of the Comintern. Most of them have now abandoned this position. In practice, as long as the Soviet Union is the only socialist country the Comintern will be dominated by its Soviet members and will make its activities conform to Soviet policy. And as long as the Soviet Union remains the only socialist country the Comintern will be assured of a home in Moscow, if only as a symbol of Soviet belief in an eventual world revolution.

The idea of a general staff coordinating the activities of communists throughout the world looks formidable at first sight, but it does not seem to have done the communists much good in practice. By following the Comintern line at various stages of the war, communists in the western countries have

been brought into greater disrepute than ever. One day the head of the Communist Party in England was indorsing the war as a crusade against fascism, the next he was condemning it as an imperialist war. One day American communists were opposing lease-lend aid to the enemies of Hitler, the next they could not have enough of it. These changes of attitude may be understood by a communist intellectual who has mastered Lenin's doctrine of revolutionary defeatism, but they can hardly be grasped by the man who runs a lathe in a Milwaukee or Pittsburgh factory. It just seems to him that his communist friends are turning flip-flops on orders from a bunch of foreigners.

Thus there are occasions when the Comintern can do a distinct disservice to the cause of communism in America. It is obviously difficult — if not impossible — for a group of people in Moscow, many of them completely unacquainted with American conditions, to direct revolutionary activities in the United States. On the face of it, the American opponents of communism could ask nothing better.

The men who dominate the Comintern may now realize this. The Comintern is working hard for the collapse of Hitlerism in all the German-controlled countries, but it has been put on a leash so far as America is concerned. The same holds true for Britain. The American and British communists I saw in Moscow looked and acted like men on the dole facing a long period of unemployment. They had not had much to do since June 22, 1941. As long as the Soviet Union values American and British cooperation they may be kept in this state of suspended animation — and that will probably be a long time.

This does not mean that American communists will suspend their activities. American communists, or their equivalent, would exist even if there were no Comintern and no Soviet government. They will undoubtedly go on working for com-

munism with the devotion and persistence which are the characteristics of communists in all countries. American communists, however, are not a Soviet-American affair. They are Americans with all the rights and duties of Americans and are subject to American law. If they are dealt with in accordance with that law, the Soviet government will raise no objections and shed no tears. Chiang Kai-Shek slaughtered thousands of Chinese communists, but Stalin continued to help him against the Japanese.

Not that I am advocating that kind of treatment for American communists or anything like it. Far from it. The czarist police hounded the communists more ruthlessly and perhaps more efficiently than the American police will ever be able to do. They beat them, tortured them, exiled them, shot them, and still the Bolsheviks won. It does no good to attack the symptoms of a disease.

American red-baiters may well heed that example. If communism ever becomes a danger to the present American system it will not be because of the activities of the Comintern or of the American communists. It will be because a large proportion of the American people may some day feel that they have been denied their economic and social rights. Stalin may have had his tongue in his cheek when he said that propaganda doesn't do anything — the Soviets do not neglect the art of propaganda — but he was talking sense when he said that the conditions of life determine the course of events. The most effective 'communists' I know in America are not the wide-eyed intellectuals or so-called labor agitators. They are the paunchy men who want to turn the clock back to 1929, that golden era of booming stock markets, fat profits — and ten or twelve million unemployed. If these men have their way in the post-war years, anything may happen to the United States.

Even then, however, the odds are against communism. A



rich and powerful nation which shrinks from its social and economic problems is not likely to turn communist. It is much more probable that it will succumb to fascism, that manifold disease whose symptoms are aggressiveness in an unsatisfied country and moral defeatism in a tired, sated country.

As one who has seen communism at work in a number of countries and fascism triumphing in others, I do not believe for a moment, however, that America's choice is limited to communism and fascism. This country is so rich in material wealth and above all in the skill and resourcefulness of its people that if it marches forward resolutely it can go on for many years without fear of either ideology. By courageously meeting the problems of the post-war world, by establishing greater social and economic equality for all classes and races, America can preserve her democracy for decades to come. The choice before America is more democracy, not less. The American Revolution, too, is a continuing revolution.

## 4

With the common objective of a stable peace, the United States and the Soviet Union seem destined to cooperate in the post-war era, and this cooperation entails no danger to the American system of government. The United States does not have to sacrifice any of its principles or condone anything it dislikes in the Soviet system.

But won't it be difficult to cooperate with the Soviets? Aren't they even more dishonest than those other shifty Europeans? Won't they repudiate any agreement they make if it suits their purposes? Doesn't their system lend itself to quick and bewildering changes of policy?

How many times have I sat in the assembly hall at Geneva and seen fifty nations, all in a bunch, betray their obligations?

Often enough to be convinced that the Soviets do not have a monopoly on perfidy. The sad truth is that nations seldom keep their word when it is inconvenient to do so. Most of the European countries fulfilled their war-debt agreements with the United States only so long as it was to their interest. The British paid one more installment than France and the rest — because it was to Britain's advantage to get the additional goodwill which resulted from that gesture. The United States respected its financial obligations until it encountered economic difficulties in 1933; then it did not hesitate to repudiate the gold clause in its securities.

The Soviet-German pact, more than anything else, gave many Americans the feeling that the Soviet system is too well adapted to sudden shifts of policy. So, unfortunately, are other systems. In the autumn of 1935 Italy invaded Abyssinia. The British people were for Abyssinia and the League. The Baldwin government detested the League and looked upon Abyssinia as just another potential colony. But in order to win the general election which was approaching, Baldwin had to put his hand on his heart and swear that the League was the apple of his eye. Britain led fifty League members in economic sanctions against Italy. The United States, though not a member of the League, was obliging enough to cooperate by applying an embargo on arms, loans, and credits. The Baldwin government won the election. Then it turned about and in cooperation with the French Prime Minister produced the Hoare-Laval plan which destroyed the League and left fifty members and the United States holding the bag.

Americans need not feel that these sudden shifts are confined to Europe. For Europeans the classic example of the about-face is the American repudiation of the Versailles Treaty. They will never forget that. They will have their doubts about Russia, too, but when the next peace settlement

is being negotiated they will be wondering all the time whether America will see it through.

Some Americans, including many American diplomats, feel that the Soviets carry hard bargaining to an extreme. They undoubtedly are hard bargainers, but so are most other nations. The most stubborn bargainer is usually the man with whom you are dealing at the moment. A few years ago the United States blissfully opened negotiations for a trade agreement with Britain. The American negotiators believed that within a very short time they would have one of those accords which were so dear to the heart of Secretary Hull. But our British cousins were not very obliging. The talks proved long and arduous, and before an agreement was reached mutterings about 'Oriental bargaining' could be heard coming from the State Department. The British, in turn, felt that the United States drove a very hard bargain in the destroyers-for-bases agreement in 1940, not only by exacting a valuable chain of bases for fifty old destroyers but by imposing conditions of occupancy which hurt the pride of the British colonies.

A nation's foreign policy is shaped by many factors — geography, economic and strategic necessities, the comparative strength and ambitions of other powers, internal politics, tradition. The character and predilections of the men who carry out policy may alter a nation's course for a time, but in the long run these fundamentals will usually tell. In the case of the Soviet Union these factors seem likely to favor a straightforward foreign policy. The Soviets need no foreign markets — so far they have not even been able to fill the demands of their domestic market. They come nearer to economic self-sufficiency than any other country except the United States. If Germany and Japan are defeated in this war the Soviet Union will be in no danger of attack and therefore will be free from the necessity to resort to shifts like the Soviet-German

pact. The great need of the Soviets will be a long period of peace and they will have to seek this in friendly contacts with other powers.

While all this is true, it would be foolish to blink the fact that there are special difficulties in relations with the Soviet Union.

The most serious of these arise from the ideological difference. On the Soviet side this has inspired the fear of the capitalist encirclement and distrust of almost every move made by a capitalist power. On the American side it has tended to magnify divergences which would be easily smoothed out in relations with other nations. Soviet heroism in this war has done a great deal to break down American prejudice. Perhaps American aid and loyal cooperation will dispel some of the distrust on the part of the Soviets.

Czarist statesmen were inclined to be extremely suspicious — often with good reason. Soviet statesmen are, if anything, even more so. The Soviets, like the czarists, are very secretive. This has often made it difficult to deal with them. They are also highly sensitive. After all the snubs they have received these many years, this is understandable. On the other hand Soviet diplomacy has been blunt and hard-boiled, and foreign diplomats have sometimes complained that the sensitive Soviets have not always shown due consideration for the feelings of others.

The art of diplomacy exists to surmount difficulties like these. If two countries have a paramount interest in common, the task of their diplomats is to remove or circumvent the obstacles which stand in the way of cooperation. American diplomacy, which has been growing more sure-footed every year, will know how to maintain a working relationship with a country whose cooperation is vital for peace. And the Soviets, on their side, will bridle their suspicions for the sake of the benefits to be derived from good relations with America.

It goes without saying that American policy toward the Soviet Union must be realistic and hard-boiled — as hard-boiled as Soviet policy. The Soviets will understand that. What they will not understand is kowtowing and scraping. There will be no need to send a red or pink or mauve ambassador to Moscow; the Soviets would not comb their concentration camps for a czarist banker, fit him out with a new tailcoat, spray him with Eau-de-Cologne, and send him to Washington. The United States government need not compromise with American communists; the Soviet government does not compromise with opponents of the Soviet system within its boundaries. But while being firm, American policy will also have to be fair. America must not demand a higher standard of conduct from the Soviets than it requires from other powers. It must never follow the Chamberlain policy of treating the Soviets as if they were of lesser consequence than Poland, Turkey, and the little Baltic republics.

The nature of America's future policy toward the Soviets has been clearly marked out by the failures of the capitalist countries in their previous relations with the Soviet Union. First they tried to destroy the Soviets by armed force. That failed and, if anyone should be so mad as to try it again it would fail once more; the Soviets would fight as stubbornly against American and British invaders as they have fought against the Germans. Next the capitalist countries tried to ignore the Soviet Union. That policy also failed, and it is even less practicable now than at the time it was attempted. Then the capitalist powers recognized the Soviets but treated them like poor relations. The outcome of that policy was a new world war.

There remains only one course — a policy of equality, carried out with firmness but without condescension or hostility. It will not be easy. It will challenge American statesmanship

and the intelligence and good sense of the American people. But it is the only policy which has a chance and it is a policy which may give the world a long period of peace.

In putting so much stress on American relations with the Soviet Union, I do not mean to imply that we can afford to ignore any other peace-loving nation. Least of all can we dispense with the cooperation of that other great ally who stood alone for a year against the greatest military power in history and held the Atlantic to America's everlasting benefit.

## AMERICA'S DESTINY

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WHEN all is said, there will be bigger problems for America to face than the adjustment of her relations with Russia. And if these problems inspire awe in some Americans, let them think of the problems which other countries will have to solve — the problems of imperial Britain, the problems of a bewildered France in search of self-respect and lost stature, the problems of a Soviet Union which had hardly emerged from the Middle Ages when it was struck by the scourge of Hitler's new medievalism.

But whether the problems are big or small, America will have to face them. The issues which are shirked in the conference halls of the nations will come home for an answer, not so dramatically, perhaps, as at Pearl Harbor, but in a way which is inescapable. The oceans which were not broad enough in 1941 will be no broader in the world of the future.

It will be a rapidly changing world, a world moving swiftly toward the climax of the revolutionary era which opened in 1917. In Europe, Asia, and Africa, white men, black men, brown and yellow men will be groping their way toward the freedoms which Americans won long ago. The backward millions will not be denied. They will persist. Their ways are not likely to be our ways, but a world which closed its eyes to the cruelty and suffering of the old order will have to accept the cruelty and suffering which are inherent in change. It will be a time to test the understanding and tolerance of Americans and the wisdom of their statesmen.

Change, of course, will not go unchallenged. The forces of reaction will be looking for a new Führer. All those shady elements in all countries which more or less openly hailed Hitler as a bulwark against Bolshevism, as a rampart against change, all those groups and individuals who helped transform an obscure house-painter into a malevolent Colossus bestriding a narrow world, all these will be looking for a new champion. The next time, we may be sure, he will not be a putty-faced man with the mustache of a film comedian. He will need a new front — it may even be a 'democratic' front. Americans will have to be vigilant that a Führer of this kind does not in time arise among them.

For America is approaching a crossroads. On the one side is the way of a nation which is fearful of its destiny, which balks at change, which refuses to make an effort of understanding and of tolerance. On the other is the way of leadership, the way of a nation which is conscious of its strength, which is ready to help the world of which America is a part through a difficult period with a minimum of suffering.

For an America which chooses the first course there will be many lonely and unhappy years. America will be at the mercy of events, her people bewildered by a world they will not



understand, driven from one moral defeat to another until their battle fleet lies rusting at the bottom of a new Pearl Harbor. There can be no more ungrateful rôle than sitting on the lid in a revolutionary era. But for an America which takes the second road new frontiers will be opened. In those lands whose peoples have been denied too long their equal place in the human family there will be fresh opportunities for American intelligence and integrity. American teachers will go forth to combat ignorance, American doctors to fight pestilence, American economists and administrators to overcome want — all helping the awakening peoples of backward lands to come forward and make their contributions to human progress. There will be new outlets for American youth, for American rugged individualism — though not for the arm-chair 'rugged individualists' of the two-car, two-bathtub, two-radio era. There will be ample scope for American statesmanship in maintaining friendly relations with the new governments which if isolated may be forced into acts of desperation. And in this fateful era the continuing American Revolution may offer an ideal of peaceful and orderly change to a world which is at heart conservative.

So at least it seems to a reporter who has never carried a hod for any ideology and who has never committed himself to a New Deal or an Old Deal, but who believes after all he has seen that there is hope in a square deal.

I returned to America with the answers to my questions. They were not so precise or so final as I could have wished, but then they never could be. The appetite grows in the eating. And perhaps it was only natural that the answers themselves suggested new questions — questions as far-reaching as those at the back of my mind that August day when the *Llanstephan Castle* slipped away from the charred docks of Liverpool and put out to sea on her voyage to Russia. Will America face the

test of peace as bravely as she met the shock of war? Will Americans see that they, not others, are the masters of America's fate? Will America go forward confidently to meet her destiny?

THE END

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